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LIFE AND TIMES  
OF  
THOMAS BETTERTON.









*Thomas Betterton.*

THE  
LIFE AND TIMES

OF THAT

*Excellent and Renowned Actor*

THOMAS BETTERTON,

*Of the Duke's and United Companies, at the Theatres  
in Portugal Street, Dorset Gardens, Drury Lane, &c.,*

DURING THE LATTER HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY.

WITH SUCH NOTICES OF THE STAGE AND ENGLISH HISTORY,  
BEFORE AND AFTER THE RESTORATION, AS SERVE  
GENERALLY TO ILLUSTRATE THE SUBJECT.

BY THE

AUTHOR AND EDITOR

*Of the Lives of "Mrs. Abington," "James Quin,"*

*ETC., ETC.*

London :

READER, ORANGE STREET, HOLBORN.

1888.



## PREFACE.



No Life, properly so called, of that great actor, Thomas Betterton, has yet been printed.

In 1710 was published a small book by one Gildon, *called* a "Life of Betterton";—it is admitted however, by all who have seen it, that it was nothing of the kind, but a sort of "Rhapsody," and rambling reflections and supposed conversations with Mr. Betterton, upon plays, players, and playing.

In 1741 was published, by the bookseller Curll, a small work entitled "The History of the English Stage," (sent out as written by Betterton himself), similar in size to the above, and not only as deficient in biographical material, but absurd and impossible in some of the few particulars attempted of such a nature.

With the exception of some odd magazine articles, culled chiefly from the foregoing, and repeating their mistakes, a chapter now and then in volumes devoting sundry pages to each of a number of actors, and carefully refraining from anything in the way of tracing out the details of a life, and occasional notices in accounts of old Plays, nothing more is shewn in Dramatic Bibliography, or has been discovered after a long and laborious search in the catalogue of the library of the British Museum.

Betterton was an actor of such renown, if he was not, as some have said he was, the *greatest* of actors, and the times he lived in, and the circumstances and experiences surrounding a player of that period, were so different to those of all others, and consequently endowed with an unusual interest, that this is to be regretted.

To supply this deficiency and want, is the object of the present unpretentious volume.

It will of course be evident to all our readers that it is utterly impossible to supply undeniable information upon a good deal of that early history of which the records have been lost, and which is consequently involved in inextricable confusion, no pains, however, have been spared in endeavouring to clear up, as far as possible, matters which careful research would throw light upon, and a number of errors disfiguring several well-known and often consulted works relating to the British Stage, have been corrected and explained.

In addition, have been added in their proper places, several ancient documents, almost, if not quite unknown to the present generation, which help us to understand the actor's career, and also full extracts from the criticisms of acknowledged high class reviewers.

The whole have been woven into what it is hoped may fairly be termed a Life of Betterton, without any pretences to absolute accuracy, or freedom from faults literary or otherwise.

# THE LIFE OF THOMAS BETTERTON.



## CHAPTER I.

Celebrity of Betterton, opinions of old Critics—Birth and Parentage—Tothill-Street, Westminster, past and present—Early life of Betterton—Errors and defects of the *Biographia Britannica*—Malone's dogmatism—Choice of the Stage as a profession—Davenant's theatre at Rutland-house—Puritan decrees against the stage—Attack on the players by soldiers—Alexander Goffe the "Jackall"—Subterfuges resorted to by the actors—Sir William Davenant's adventures, starts his theatre, character of the first performance—Davenant's bolder and more pronounced efforts—Number of theatres in London, Prynne's testimony, Pepys' Diary, the *Roscius Anglicanus*—Restoration of King Charles 2nd, and granting of a Patent to Davenant—Articles of Agreement between Davenant, Betterton and others—The Master of the Revels, extracts from his office book—Attempt to control the players, struggle for the mastery—The Patents granted to Davenant and Killigrew, recital of—Opposition of Sir Henry Herbert, correspondence with the actors, petitions to the King—Renewal of Davenant's Patent—Sir Henry Herbert's defiance of the King—Action at Law, Herbert and Thelwall *v.* Thomas Betterton, plaintiff's statement—Davenant petitions the King—End of the strife, success of Davenant and the others concerned with him.

JUDGING by the fragmentary notices of this actor occasionally met with in works biographical and dramatic, there cannot be the slightest doubt that his genius was of

a very high order indeed : writers and critics, some of them, such as Colley Cibber, men of acknowledged ability, in this respect vying with each other in the production of panegyrics setting forth his excellence. The "*Biographia Britannica*" describes him as the "most famous actor upon the stage, who might be very justly styled the English *Roscus*"; Davies calls him the "accomplished actor and respectable man"; Barton Baker in his "*Old Actors*," calls him "this noble Actor," and Galt in his "*Lives of the Players*" says "He was not, at seventy, equal to what he had been at fifty, but to the last he was without his equal; and for many years after his decease, his parts in Shakespear were considered as unsupplied." Pepys also in his diary has a number of entries in which he expresses his unbounded admiration of this actor, declaring him to be the best he had ever met with, and Gildon, in his Preface to the "*Life of Betterton*," a book most inappropriately named, as it was indeed no "*Life*" at all, but as the *Biographia Britannica* puts it, a "kind of rhapsody," says:—"As it was said of Brutus and Cassius, that they were the last of the Romans; so may it be said of Mr. Betterton, that he was the last of our Tragedians. There being, therefore, so much due to his memory from all lovers of the Stage; I could not lay aside my design of conveying his name with this discourse at least to a little longer date, than nature has given his body. Nor can I imagine than it can be looked on as injurious to our reputation, either as men of candour, figure or sense, to express a concern for the loss of a man so excellent in an art which is now expiring, and for which antiquity had so peculiar a value; since it is plain from the motto of this book, that Cicero pleading the cause of the poet Archias, tells the Judge, a man of the first quality, that everybody was



concerned for the death of Roscius the Comedian ; or which is more emphatic, says he, Who of us was of so brutish and sour a temper as not to be moved, at the late death of Roscius ? Who though he died old, yet for the excellence of his art, and beauty in performance, seemed as if he ought to have been exempted entirely from death.

“ Whether Mr. Betterton or Roscius made a just parallel or not in their merits as actors, is difficult to know ; but thus far it is certain, that let the excellence of the Roman be never so great, that of the Britain was the greatest we had, and though we shall find, that in Cicero’s time the decorums of the Stage were more exactly observed than in ours, yet we may suppose Mr. Betterton in his own particular performance, on a foot with Roscius, especially when we consider that our Player excelled in both Comedy and Tragedy, the Roman only in the former, as far as we can discover.”

Thomas Betterton, son of an under-cook of King Charles the First’s, was born in Tothill Street, Westminster, probably in the year 1635. Curll, the bookseller, in his “ History of the English Stage,” published in 1741, says the year was 1637, but on the same page of his book, writes : “ I must not here pass by Mr. Betterton’s Loyalty and Courage ; who though but a mere stripling, went a volunteer into the King’s service as Mr. Hart, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Mohun, had done before him. They were all four engaged at the Battle of Edgehill in Warwickshire.” A mere stripling was Thomas Betterton ? Something less than that, Mr. Curll. The battle of Edgehill was fought on the twenty third of October, 1642, the stripling was therefore just five years old at that date. This preposterous statement has been repeated by other writers. Whincop, author of a “ Compleat List of

all the Dramatic Poets, &c.," to the year 1747, says Betterton, was born in 1638, but the majority of writers agree in giving 1635.

Materials for a life of this great actor are unfortunately very scarce, and, to add to the difficulty, nearly everything save what has just been mentioned, occurring previous to his choice of the Stage as a profession, has been the subject of dispute. The *Biographia Britannica* says, "There are very few lives in which the dates and circumstances are more difficult to be settled with tolerable certainty than this, which probably arises from nothing so much as persons affirming facts upon memory, in which they were liable to be mistaken, and others committing them to writing without discerning their mistakes. As for instance, Mr. Charles Gildon tells us, that at his decease he was seventy-five years of age. Another author says that he was about seventy, and a person who had reason to be better acquainted with his history, assures us, that he was considerably above that age. In all this we have nothing of certainty; but the late Mr. Southern who was very well acquainted with Mr. Betterton, when applied to upon this head, recollected that on his last benefit Mr. Betterton declared he was in his seventy-fifth year, if so, that fixes the time of his birth very exactly."

Tothill, or Tuttle Street, as it was sometimes written, the most ancient street in Westminster, was at one time a region of some repute as the dwelling place of several noblemen and gentlemen of the higher class, whose names are well known in history, such as Lord Dudley, the Bishop of Chester in 1488, Sir Andrew Dudley, Lord Daere, Lord Grey de Wilton, Sir George Carew, Edmund Burke, Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1644, and Southern

the dramatist. The name appears to be derived from "toot," beacon, from the Welsh "twt," a rising, and was, no doubt, given to this spot from the circumstance of there being a beacon here, marking it as the highest spot in the region of Westminster. Mr. Wykeham Archer thinks the name was derived from "Teut," the chief divinity of the Druids, be this as it may, however, it is agreed on all hands that in this street was born Thomas Betterton, the subject of our present memoir.

Doran suggests that as far back as 1635, this street was "on the decline, or one of King Charles's cooks could hardly have had a home in it," with the dawn of 1700 however it decidedly began to go down, and some years afterwards was almost entirely demolished; the greater part of the northern side is now occupied by the buildings of the Royal Westminster Aquarium.

[Very little seems to be known of the boyish years of Betterton, except that he received in several schools the rudiments of a tolerable education, and that he displayed a great propensity for reading and study. This disposition on his part suggested to his family his further education and training for one of the learned professions, but the disturbed state of the kingdom rendering this somewhat difficult, another and more readily attainable sphere of labour had to be sought.]

Here again, we find the biographers in opposition to each other. That he was apprenticed to a bookseller, all are agreed, but some, as Gildon, say it was to Mr. Rhodes at the Bible at Charing Cross, where he had for his under apprentice Mr. Kynaston, while others, with the *Biographia Britannica*, insist that it was to Mr. John Holden, a person in those days very famous, and much in the confidence of

Sir William Davenant. The *Britannica* says "It is affirmed by Mr. Gildon that he was bound to Mr. Rhodes, a bookseller, and that he was fellow apprentice with Mr. Kynaston, but if Mr. Betterton might be allowed to know this fact better than anybody else, he told the late Mr. Pope that he was bound to Mr. Holden." Richardson's "*Life of Milton*" (1734), p. 90, states that Betterton was "Prentice to a Bookseller, John Holden, the same who printed Davenant's *Gondibert*." It is admitted, however, that he might afterwards have lived with Mr. Rhodes, a question, says the *Britannica*, not easy to be answered at this distance of time (1747), and when there are few people living to whom any application could be made with any tolerable hopes of receiving an answer with certainty. Unless this latter solution of the question be admitted, that he lived with both Rhodes and Holden, the weight of evidence certainly preponderates in favour of the former, who was at one time wardrobe-keeper and prompter to the theatre in Blackfriars, before the suppression of dramatic amusements.

Davies says, "The compilers of the *Biographia Britannica*, a work which confers honour upon themselves and the nation, have very assiduously laboured, to clear up the obscurities in which the life of this eminent man is involved. In a matter of great difficulty, and where so little authentic information can be obtained, it is not surprising that a few mistakes should escape the most inquisitive intelligence. I shall endeavour to rectify some errors in that work, and to throw light on certain facts which have, through length of time, been somewhat darkened. I do not find, that, in the article on Betterton, the writers of this valuable work have made any use of Downes's *Roseius Anglieanus*; and, though it must be confessed that Downes is very confused and

inaccurate, yet, as he is almost the only writer on the stage for a long period, some valuable matter may, with curious searching, be picked out of his pamphlet. His authority, relating to the age of Betterton, must give place to the more authentic testimony of Southern, adduced in the *Biographia*, who, it seems, had his intelligence from the mouth of the great actor himself. By this account he was born in 1635, though Downes places his birth three years later : and this seems a little surprising, as the *Roscius Anglicanus* was published in the lifetime of Betterton, who must have conversed with the author almost continually from 1662 to 1706, the date of his *Narrative*.”—(*Miscell.*, 3, 228).

Why these writers should place so much reliance in the testimony of Southern in preference to that of all others, it is difficult to say ; they tell us that he was very well acquainted with Mr. Betterton, and that his recollection of the sayings and doings of the great actor was particularly vivid ; but there is no reason why the evidence of Gildon, Downes, and others who were also in frequent communication with Betterton, should not be regarded as of equal authority.

Malone in his “*Historical Account of the English Stage*,” speaks somewhat dogmatically as follows : “ Very inaccurate accounts of this actor have been given in the *Biographia Britannica* and several other works. It is observable that biographical writers often give the world long dissertations concerning facts and dates, when the fact contested might at once be ascertained by visiting a neighbouring parish church : and this has been particularly the case of Mr. Betterton. He was the son of Matthew Betterton (under cook to King Charles the First) and was baptized, as I learn, from the register of St. Margaret’s parish, August 11th, 1635. He

could not have appeared on the stage in 1656, as has been asserted, no theatre being then allowed. His first appearance was at the Cockpit, in Drury Lane, in Mr. Rhodes's company, who played there by a licence in the year 1659, when Betterton was twenty-four years of age."

The next, and perhaps still more difficult, question to decide is in reference to the first appearance of Betterton upon the stage, accounts differing as much upon this as upon the year of his birth. One writer asserts that being apprentice to a bookseller, his visits to the play-house about his master's business, suggested to him the choice of the stage as a profession, Gildon, however, says "That which prepared Mr. Betterton and his fellow prentice for the stage was, that his master Rhodes having formerly been Wardrobe-keeper to the King's company of comedians in the Blackfriars, on General Monk's march to London, in 1659, with his Army, got a Licence from the Powers then in being, to set up a company of Players in the Cockpit in Drury Lane, and soon made his company complete, his apprentice Mr. Betterton for Men's parts, and Mr. Kynaston for Women's parts, being at the head of them. Mr. Betterton was now about twenty-two years of age, when he got great applause by acting in the Loyal Subject, the Wild Goose Chase, the Spanish Curate, and many more. But while our young actor is thus rising under his Master Rhodes, Sir William Davenant—getting a Patent of King Charles the Second for erecting a Company under the name of the Duke of York's Servants,—took Mr. Betterton and all that acted under Mr. Rhodes, into his Company."

There is evidently something wrong here, for if Betterton at twenty-two years of age gained great applause for his acting, he must have joined the stage in 1656 or 7, whereas



he is said to have joined in 1659. Probably 1656 is the real time at which he first became an actor, soon after Sir William Davenant opened his theatre at Rutland-house, Charterhouse Yard, about the 21st or 23rd of May, supported by Lord Whitlocke, Sir John Maynard, and other persons of rank.

There was, of course, considerable difficulty and danger attendant upon such a venture, for when the Puritans had gained the upper hand in the Parliament, they had passed an Act, on February 11th, 1647, ordering that "All Stage galleries, seats and boxes should be pulled down by warrant of two Justices of the Peace—that all Actors of plays for the time to come, being convicted, should be publicly whipped, and all spectators of plays for every offence should pay five shillings."

Enforcing this upon one occasion when peace had been restored, and, the royalists defeated, and the remaining actors had united and ventured to act a play or two with the greatest care and privacy, a party of foot soldiers, after the performance had gone on some three or four days, surrounded the house, the Cock-pit in Drury Lane, in the middle of the tragedy of the Bloody Brother, and hurried off the performers to the prison of Hatton House, where they kept them for some time and robbed them of their clothes. Afterwards they would travel several miles from London and play at various gentlemen's houses, "in particular Holland House at Kensington," to small assembled companies who used to make a collection for them, "each giving a broad Piece or the like." One Alexander Goffe, the Woman Actor at Black-friars, who was well known to the nobility and gentry, was appointed a sort of agent, or "Jackall," as the old dialogue on plays and players says, to convey the notices of

the times and places of the various performances. At particular times such as Christmas and Bartholomew Fair, freedom to act was only to be obtained by bribing the officer in command at Whitehall, when a few days' performances were managed at the Red Bull in St. John Street, but even with this precautionary measure, they were often disturbed by the soldiers, and their gatherings broken up.

The lives of these early players were in such times extremely hard, and absolute want was constantly staring them in the face; in a variety of ways they endeavoured to eke out a precarious existence, as by publishing copies of plays previously only in manuscript, but many of them notwithstanding every exertion, died in a condition of the greatest poverty.

That violence was being done to the tastes and desires of many by these stringent and arbitrary measures, was evident from the subterfuges resorted to by the players to provide the public with the very simple recreation then at all possible. Robert Cox, considered a capital performer, used to act his own farces under the presence of rope-dancing, and met with an enthusiastic reception wherever he went in Town or Country. So good a delineator of character was he, that it is said by Langbaine, that after he had been playing the part of Simpleton the Smith at a country fair, a real Smith of some eminence in those parts, who saw him act, came to him and offered to take him as his journeyman, and even to allow him twelve pence per week more than the customary wages.

It appears that Davenant had been in considerable trouble just before the opening of this theatre, having been accused before the Parliament of being a partner with many of the King's friends in the design of bringing the army to London



for his Majesty's protection. He was then arrested at Faversham and sent up to London, the others making their escape. Some time after, he was bailed, but attempting a second time to get over to France, he was taken in Kent. He contrived at last, however, to effect his escape and reached the continent in safety. Endeavouring to make his way to Virginia, a colony that remained loyal to the King, the vessel was captured off the coast of France, by a parliamentary ship of war, and he was conveyed first of all to Cowes in the Isle of Wight, from whence he was taken to the Tower of London, for the purpose of trial by a high commission court. At this time it is considered his life was in considerable danger, but he somehow contrived to get his liberty, by what means it is difficult to say. Some tell us two Aldermen of York, whom he had befriended, when he held high command in the Earl of Newcastle's army, when they were prisoners, interfered in his behalf (*Athen. Oxon. v. 2*): others say that Milton assisted him, (see Richardson's *Notes on Paradise Lost*): at any rate his life was saved, though two years after he was still a prisoner in the Tower. Here, however, he clearly got into favour with the Lord Keeper Whitlocke, from whom he received many an indulgence. From one thing he went on to another, and at last obtained even his freedom, but in circumstances extremely straitened, if not actually poverty stricken. What was he to do to recruit his exhausted finances? His thoughts turned towards a play-house, but that was forbidden, and would find no favour with those who were responsible for the rigid morals of the time, yet well enough he knew there were many who felt considerably chafed by the sternness with which their favourite amusement was suppressed, and who would support him liberally if he could but commence a performance. He soon by his energy and de-

termination assembled a number of friends around him who encouraged him in a variety of ways, and assisted by the gentlemen mentioned, viz. Lord Whitlocke, Sir John Maynard, and others, started the theatre at Rutland house in 1656. He and his friends had rightly judged the hyprocrisy of the times, for the people who had been persecuting the poor players and visiting them with legal penalties for the simplest elocutionary displays in private, now flocked into his theatre, to his great profit, to witness what he from notions of policy called an opera, but which was nothing more nor less than a play.

Whitlocke in his "Memorials of the English Affairs," gives the following :—"September 3rd, 1656. I received this letter from Sir William Davenant.

"My Lord,

"When I consider the nicety of the times, I fear it may draw a curtain between your Lordship and our Opera ; therefore I have presumed to send your Lordship, hot from the Press, what we mean to represent ; making your Lordship my supreme judge, though I despair to have the honour of inviting you to be a spectator. I do not conceive the perusal of it worthy any part of your Lordships leisure, unless your ancient relation to the Muses make you not unwilling to give a little entertainment to poetry ; though in so mean a dress as this, and coming from, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's

"Most obedient servant,

"William Davenant."

A little book of ninety small pages is occasionally to be met with, published in the year 1656, called "The First Day's

Entertainment at Rutland House, by Declamations and Musick : After the manner of the Ancients ;" this appears to be the document alluded to in the above letter.

The Britannica says, "This being an introductory piece, it required all the author's wit to make it answer different intentions, for, first, it was to be so pleasing as to gain applause ; and next, it was to be so remote from the very appearance of a play as not to give any offence to that pretended sanctity which was then in fashion. It began with music, then followed a prologue, in which the author banters the oddity of his own performance. The curtain being drawn up to the sound of slow and solemn music, there followed a grave declamation by one in a gilded rostrum, who personated Diogenes, and whose business was to rail at and expose public entertainments. Then music in a lighter strain, after which a person in the character of Aristophanes, the old comic poet, answered Diogenes, and showed the use and excellency of dramatic entertainments. The whole of the grave entertainment was concluded by a song accompanied with music, in which the arguments on both sides are succinctly and elegantly stated. The second part of the entertainment consisted of two light declamations ; the first by a citizen of Paris, who wittily rallies the follies of London ; the other by a citizen of London, who takes the same liberty with Paris and its inhabitants. To this was tacked a song, and after that came a short epilogue : the music which was very good, was composed by Dr. Coleman, Capt. Cook, Mr. Henry Laws, and Mr. George Hudson."

Davenant was a man of considerable boldness, and proceeding upon the principle of "nothing venture, nothing have," followed up his first effort with others still more daring, and wrote and acted plays of a much more pronounced

character than formerly. After a number of performances at Rutland House he removed with his company to the Cockpit or Phoenix, in Drury Lane, where Mr. Betterton, seems to have made his first appearance, "for," says the *Britannica*, "his master Mr Holden having printed Sir William's Poem called *Gondibert*, and afterwards many other performances of his, Betterton became thereby known to that gentleman, who finding him a very capable person, took great pains in instructing him, and gave him the first relish for theatric entertainments, as himself frequently acknowledged, and therefore we have reason to think that this point is at last freed from those difficulties with which it has been hitherto incumbered."

In estimating the difficulty attendant upon the preparation of a biographical sketch of an actor of this period, it is worthy of note, amongst other things, that even with regard to the number of theatres and their localities, there is a good deal of contradiction and misstatement. Whitefriars and Salisbury Court, for instance, were frequently spoken of as if they were two distinct theatres, whereas there is evidence to show that they were one and the same. The writings of Reed and Prynne, especially those of the latter, render this tolerably clear. In the "Epistle dedicatory" to the "*Histriomastix*," he says, "Two olde Play-houses (the Fortune and Red Bull), being also lately re-edified and enlarged, and one new Theatre (the Whitefriars Playhouse) erected, the multitude of our London Play-hunters being so augmented now, that all the ancient Diuel's Chappels (for so the Fathers stile all play-houses) being five in number, are not sufficient to containe their troopes, whence we see a sixth now added to them, whereas even in vitious Nero, his rayne, there were but threc standing theatres in Pagan

Rome (though farre more spacious than our Christian London) and those three too many."

Genest says :— "On the supposition that Whitefriars and Salisbury Court were distinct theatres, there would have been not only six, but seven theatres in 1633, when Prynne published his book." Maitland in his "Survey of London," does not define how far Whitefriars extended, but he says sufficient to show that the theatre in Salisbury Court might be called the theatre in Whitefriars with little or no impropriety—his words are (vol. II., p. 993). "The Priory of the Carmelites, or Whitefriars, stood on the south side of Fleet Street, between the New Temple and Salisbury Court."

The Theatre here situate, was, sometimes, perhaps generally known as Salisbury Court, but in Pepys' Diary we the following :—

"March 1st, 1661. To Whitefriars and saw the Bondman acted, an excellent play and well done. But above all that I ever saw, Betterton do the Bondman the best."

"March 19th, 1661. Mr. Creed and I to Whitefriars where we saw the Bondman acted most excellently, and though I have seen it often, yet I am every time more and more pleased with Betterton's action."

With respect to Whitefriars, Genest remarks, "Chalmers says (from Stowe's Chronicle) that this theatre was established in 1629.—Langbane says that Bussy D'Ambois his Revenge was printed in 1613, and had often been presented at the private house in White-friars.—The Widow's Tears, printed in 1612, is said to have been often acted at Black and White-friars,—but Prynne, in his epistle dedicatory 1633, expressly calls Whitefriars *a new theatre*."

There is evidently a deal of confusion in these early accounts and any attempt to arrange a table of facts worthy

to be pronounced infallibly correct, would be a task hopeless and impossible. Different writers have accepted the varying statements here recorded, each of them probably upon very slight authority, and with anything but clear ideas as to why they did so.

Downes in his "*Roscius Anglicanus*"—a tract pronounced by some to be of great value, though said by others to be inaccurate,—endorses the statement that upon the arrival of General Monck in London, 1659, Rhodes the bookseller, obtaining a licence from the then governing state, fitted up a house for acting called the Cock-pit in Drury Lane, and in a short time compleated his company.

Their names were, he says—

"Mr. Betterton, Mr. Sheppy, Mr. Lovel, Mr. Lilliston, Mr. Underhill, Mr. Turner, Mr. Dixon, Robert Nokes—Note, these six commonly acted Women's Parts. Mr. Kynaston, James Nokes, Mr. Angel, William Betterton, Mr. Mosely, Mr. Floid."

In his diary of Feb. 3rd, 1659, Pepys says :—"We went walking all over Whitchall, whither General Monck was newly come, and we saw all his forces march by in very good plight, and stout officers."

Then on the 18th of August, 1660, he writes :—"Captain Ferrers took me and Creed to the Cockpit play, the first that I have had time to see since my coming from the sea. The Loyall Subject, where one Kynaston, a boy, acted the Duke's Sister (*Olympia*) but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life."

Downes mentions this play, the "*Loyall Subject*," as one that was performed at the Cockpit at this time, and as one in which Betterton was highly applauded.

The question is, where was Betterton playing during the



year 1660? Putting Downes and Pepys together it would seem that it was at the Cockpit in Drury Lane. Genest however, says that Downes seems to have copied from Wright and that they are, probably, both wrong, "it being certain from Pepys that the old Actors were in possession of the Cockpit in 1660, and that Rhodes' Company were acting at Whitefriars (or Salisbury Court as it is more usually called) in March, 1661."

Soon after the Restoration (King Charles the Second returning to London, May 29th, 1660) Davenant who had been re-arrested at the time of Sir George Booth's insurrection, and again released, wrote some complimentary poems to the King and General Monck, and shortly after received a Patent from the King for the formation of a company of actors to be called the Duke's Company, Killigrew (a Groom of the Chambers) receiving one at the same time for a company to be called the King's Servants. The King's Company acted first at the Red Bull at the upper end of St. John's Street, from thence they removed to Vere Street, Clare Market, finally establishing themselves in Drury Lane, at the Theatre Royal. Davenant after leaving his old house opened the Duke's Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Britannica says, he took into his Company, all who had formerly played under Mr. Rhodes, in the Cock-pit in Drury Lane, and amongst those, the famous Mr. Betterton, who appeared first to advantage under the patronage of Sir William Davenant.

The Articles of Agreement between Sir William Davenant and Thomas Betterton and others are considered to afford such a complete picture of the theatrical management of the period, that they are herewith appended.

"Articles of Agreement tripartite, indented, made, and  
c 2

agreed upon this fifth day of Nouember, in the twelfth yeere of the reigne of our souereigne Lord King Charles the Second, Annoque Domini 1660, between Sir William Davenant of London, Kt. of the first part, and Thomas Batterton [Betterton] Thomas Sheppey, Robert Noakes, James Noakes, Thomas Lovell, John Moseley, Cave Underhill, Robert Turner, and Thomas Lilleston, of the second part; and Henry Harris, of the citty of London, painter, of the third part, as followeth.

“Imprimis, the said Sir William Dauenant doth for himself, his executors, administrators, and assigns, couenant, promise, grant, and agree to and with the said Thomas Batterton (and the others) that he the said Sir William Dauenant by vertue of the authority to him derived for that purpose does hereby constitute, ordeine and erect them the said Thomas Batterton (and the others) and their associates, to bee a company, publicuely to act all manner of tragedies, comedies and playes whatsoever, in any theatre or playhouse erected in London or Westminster or the suburbs thereof, and to take the usual rates for the same, to the uses hereafter exprest, untill the said Sir William Dauenant shall provide a newe theatre with scenes.

“Item, It is agreed by and between all the said parties to these presents, that the said company, (untill the said theatre bee provided by the said Sir William Davenant) bee authorised by him to act tragedies, comedies and playes in the playhouse called Salisbury Court playhouse, or any other house, upon the conditions only hereafter following, vizt.

“That the generall receipte of money of the said playhouse shall (after the house-rent, hirelings, and all other accustomed and necessary expenses in that kind be defrayed)



bee divided into fowerteene proportions or shares, whereof the said Sir William Dauenant shall have foure full proportions or shares to his owne use, and the rest to the use of the said companie.

“That during the time of playing in the said playhouse (untill the aforesaid theatre bee provided by the said Sir Wm. Dauenant) the said Sir Wm. Davenant shall depute the said Thomas Batterton, James Noakes, and Thomas Sheppey, or any one of them particularly, for him and on his behalfe, to receive his proportion of those shares, and to surveye the accompte conduceinge thereunto, and to pay the said proportion every night to him the said Sir Wm. Dauenant or his assigns, which they doe hereby covenant to pay accordingly.

“That the said Thomas Batterton, Thomas Sheppey, and the rest of the said company shall admit such a consort of musicians into the said play-house for their necessary use, as the said Sir William shall nominate and provide, duringe their playinge in the said playhouse, not exceeding the rate of 30s. the day, to bee defrayed out of the general expences of the house before the said fowerteene shares bee devided.

“That the said Thomas Batterton, Thomas Sheppey and the rest of the said companie soe authorised to play in the playhouse in Salisbury Court or elsewhere, as aforesaid, shall at one week's warninge given by the said Sir William Dauenant, his heirs or assignes, dissolve and conclude their plaeing at the house and place aforesaid, or at any other house where they shall play, and shall remove and joyne with the said Henry Harris and with other men and women provided or to be provided by the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, to performe such tragedies, comedies, playes, and represen-

tations in that theatre to be provided by him the said Sir William as aforesaid.

“Item, It is agreed by and betweene all the said parties to these presents in manner and form followinge, vizt. That when the said companie, together with the said Henry Harris, are joyned with the men and women to be provided by the said Sir Wm. Dauenant to act and performe in the said theatre to bee provided by the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, that the generall receipte of the said theatre (the generall expence first beinge deducted) shall bee devided into fifteene shares or proportions, whercof two shares or proportions shall bee paid to the said Sir William Dauenant, his executors, administrators or assigns, towards the house-rent, buildinge, scaffoldinge, and makeing of frames for scenes, and one other share or proportion shall likewise bee paid to the said Sir William, his executors, etc., for provision of habitts, properties, and scenes, for a supplement of the said theatre.

“That the other twelvc shares (after all expences of men hirelinges and other eustomary expences deducted) shall bee devided into seaven and five shares or proportions, whereof the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, his executors, &c., shall have seauen shares or proportions, to mainteine all the women that are to performe or represent womens parts in the aforesaid tragedies, comedies, playcs, or representations; and in consideration of ereectinge and establishinge them to bee a companie, and his, the said Sir William’s paines and expences to that purpose for many yeeres. And the other five of the said shares or proportions is to bee devided amongst the rest of the persons [parties] to theis presents, whereof the said Henry Harris is to have an equal share

with the greatest proportion in the said five shares or proportions.

“That the general receipte of the said theatre (from and after such time as the said companie have performed their playeing in Salisbury Court or in any other playhouse, according to and noe longer than the tyme allowed by him the said William as aforesaid) shall bee by ballatine, or tickets sealed for all doors and boxes.

“That Sir Wm. Dauenant, his executors, etc., shall at the general chardge of the whole receipte provide three persons to receive money for the said tickets, in a roome adjoyning to the said theatre; and that the actors in the said theatre, nowe parties to these presents, who are concerned in the said five shares or proportionous, shall dayly or weekly appoint two or three of themselves, or the men hirelings deputed by them, to sit with the aforesaid three persons appointed by the said Sir William, that they may survey or give an accompt of the money received for the said tickets: That the said seaven shares shall be paid nightly by the said three persons by the said Sir Wm. deputed, or by anie of them, to him the said Sir Wm. his executors, administrators, or assignes.

“That the said Sir William Dauenant shall appoint half the number of the door-keepers necessary for the receipt of the said tickets for doores and boxes, the wardrobe-keeper, barber, and all other necessary persons as hee the said Sir Wm. shall think fitt, and their sallary to be defrayed at the publique chardge.

“That when any sharer amongst the actors of the aforesaid shares, and parties to these presents shall dye, that then the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, his excutors, etc., shall have the denomination and appointment of the successor.

and successors. And likewise that the wages of the men hirelings shall be appointed and established by Sir Wm. Dauenant, his executors, etc.

“That the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, his executors, etc., shall not bee obliged out of the shares or proportions allowed to him for the supplyeinge of cloathes, habitts, and scenes, to provide eyther hatts, feathers, gloues, ribbons, swordebelts, bands, stockings, or shoes, for any of the men actors aforesaid, unless it be a propertie.

“That a private boxe bee prouided and established for the use of Thomas Killigrew, Esqr., one of the groomes of his Maties. bedchamber, sufficient to containe sixe persons, into which the said Mr. Killigrew, and such as he shall appoint, shall haue liberty to enter without any sallary or pay for their entrance into such a place of the said theatre as the said Sir Wm. Dauenant, his heirs, etc., shall appoint.

“That the said Thomas Batterton (and the others as aboue) doe hereby for themselues couenant, promise, grant and agree, to and with the said Sir W. D., his executors, &c., by these presents, that they and euery of them shall become bound to the said Sir Wm. Dauenant in a bond of 5000*l*. conditioned for the performance of these presents. And that euery successor to any part of the said fiue shares or proportions shall enter into the like bonds before he or they shall bee admitted to share anie part or proportion of the said shares or proportions.

“And the said Henry Harris doth hereby for himself, his executors, &c., couenant, promise, grant and agree, to and with the said Sir William Dauenant, his executors, &c., by these presents, that hee the said Henry Harris shall within one weeke after the notice giuen by Sir William Dauenant for the concludinge of the playeinge at Salisbury Court or

any other house else abouesaid, become bound to the said Sir Wm. Dauenant in a bond of 5000*l.* conditioned for the performance of these [presents]. And that euery successor to any of the said fiue shares shall enter into the like bond, before hee or they shall bee admitted to haue any part or proportion in the said fiue shares.

“Item, it is mutually agreed by and betweene all the parties to these presents, that the said Sir William Dauenant alone shall bee Master and Superior, and shall from time to time haue the sole gouernment of the said Thomas Batterton, Thomas Sheppey, Robert Noakes, James Noakes, Thomas Louell, John Mosely, Caue Underhill, Robert Turner, and Thomas Lilleston, and also of the said Henry Harris, and their associates, in relation to the playes [play-house] by these presents agreed to bee erected.”\*

Hitherto, the licensing of Plays had been in the hands of a certain official styled the “Master of the Reuels;” without his authority no piece whatever could be lawfully acted. It was his business to examine everything before it was played, so that he might purge it of any immoralities or seditious expressions before it went into public, or, if he deemed it irreparable, forbid it altogether; for this license he was paid in the reign of Elizabeth, one noble, but afterwards the sum of two pounds.

In the office books of these officials some curious and interesting entries are found which shew us how things were managed. Malone and others give us a number of these, some of which we reproduce, owing to their connection, more or less, with the subject in hand.

\* From the Haslewood MSS.

"On Friday the nineteenth of Oetober, (so the MS., though afterwards Sir Henry Herbert calls it Friday, the 18th ?) 1633, I sent a warrant by a messenger of the chamber to suppress The Tamer Tamd, to the Kings players, for that afternoone, and it was obeyed ; upõn complaints of foule and offensive matters conteyned therein.

"They acted The Scornful Lady instead of it, I have enterd the warrant here.

"These are to will and require you to forbear the actinge of your play called The Tamer Tamd, or the Taminge of the Tamer, this afternoone, or any more till you have leave from mee : and this at your perill.

"On Friday morninge the 18th Oetober, 1633.

"To Mr. Taylor, Mr. Lowins, or any of the Kings players at the Blackfryers."

"On Saterdag morninge followinge the book was brought mee, and at my lord of Hollands request I returned it to the players ye Monday morninge after, purg'd of oaths, prophaness, and ribaldrye, being ye 21 of Octob 1633."

"Because the stopping of the acting of this play for that aftermoone, it being an ould play, hath rayseed some discourse in the players, thogh no disobedience, I have thought fitt to insert here ther submission upon a former disobedience, and to declare that it concernes the Master of the Rcvells to bee carefull of their ould revived playes, as of their new, sinec they may conteyne offensive matter, which ought not to be allowed in any time.

"The Master ought to have copies of their new playes left with him, that he may be able to shew what he hath allowed or disallowed.



“All ould plays ought to be brought to the Master of the Revells, and have his allowance to them for which he shall have his fee, since they may be full of offensive things against church and state ; ye rather that in former times the poetts tooke greater liberty than is allowed them by mee.

“The players ought not to study their parts till I have allowed of the booke.”

“To Sir Henry Herbert, Kt. master of his Maties. Revels.

“After our humble servise remembered unto your good worship, Whereas not long since we acted a play called the Spanishe Viccroy, not being licensed under your worships hande, nor allowd of : wee doe confess and herby acknowledge that wee will not act any play without your hand or substitute hereafter, nor doe any thinge that may prejudice the authority of your office. So hoping that this humble submission of ours may bee accepted, wee have therunto sett our hands.

Joseph Taylor.

John Lowen.

Richard Robinson.

John Shancke.

Elyard Swanston.

John Rice.

Thomas Pollard.

Will. Rowley.

Robert Benfcilde.

Richard Sharpe.

George Burght.”

“MR. KNIGHT,

“In many things you have saved mee labour ; yet wher your judgment or penn fayld you, I have made bouldc to use mine. Purge ther parts, as I have the booke. And I hope every hearer and player will thinke that I have done God good servise, and the quality no wronge ; who hath no

greater enemies than oaths, prophaness, and publique ribaldry, whch. for the future I doe absolutely forbid to bee presented unto mee in any playbooke, as you will answer it at your perill. 21 Octob. 1633."

This was subscribed to their play of the Tamer Tamd, and directed to Knight, their book-keeper.

"The 24th Octob., 1633, Lowins and Swanstone were sorry for their ill manners, and craved my pardon, which I gave them in presence of Mr. Taylor and Mr. Benfeilde."

"On Monday the 4 May, 1640, William Beeston was taken by a messenger, and committed to the Marshalsey, by my Lord Chamberlens warrant, for playinge a playe without license. The same day the company at the Cockpitt was commanded by my Lord Chamberlens warrant to forbear playinge, for playinge when they were forbidden by mee, and for other disobedience, and laye still monday, tuesday and wensday. On thursday at my Lord Chamberlen's entreaty I gave them their liberty, and upon their petition of submission subscribed by the players, I restored them to their liberty on thursday."

The document already alluded to, giving authority to Sir Wm. Davenant and Thomas Killigrew to erect two theatres and set up two Companies of actors, ran as follows :—

"Charles the Second by the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, Ffrance and Ireland, King deffender of the ffayth, &c. To all to whome these presents shall Come Greeting, Whereas wee are giuen to vnderstand that Certaine persons In and about our Citty of London or the Suburbs thereof, Doe frequently assemble for the performing and Acting of



Playes and Enterludes for Rewards; To which diuers of Our Subiects doe for their Entertainment Resort, which said playes, As wee are Informed doe Containe much Matter of Prophanation and Scurrility, soe that such kind of Entertainments, which if well Mannaged might serue as Morall Instructions In Humanne life: As the same are now vsed doe for the most part tende to the Debauchinge of Manners of Such as are present at them, and are very Scandalous and offensive, to all pious and well disposed persons, Wee takeing the premisses into our Princely Consideration, yett not holding it necessary totally to Suppress the vse of theatres, because wee are assured that if the Evill & Scandall In the Playes that now are or haue bin acted, were taken away, the same might serue as Innocent and Harmlesse diuertisements for many of our Subiects, And Haueing Experience of the Art and skill of our trusty and wellbeloued Thomas Killigrew Esquire one of the Groomes of our Bedchamber and of Sir William Daueuant Knight for the purposes hereafter mencioned, Doe hereby giue & Grante vnto the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant full power and authority to Erect two Companies of Players Consistinge respectiue of such persons, As they shall chuse and appoint, And to purchase bulde and Erect or hire at their Charge, As they shall thinke fitt, two Houses or theaters, with all Conuenient Roomes and other Necessaries therevnto appertaining, for the Representation of Tragydies, Comedyes, Playes, Operas and all other Entertainments of that nature In Conuenient places And likewise to Setle and Esstablish such payments to be paid by those that shall resort to see the said Representations performed As either haue bin accustomed Giuen and taken in the like kind or as shall be reasonable In regard of the

Great Expences of Scenes musick and such new Decorations as Haue not bin formerly used with further power to make such allowances out of that which they shall so receiue to the Actors and other persons Employed In the said Representations in both houses Respectiue As they shall thinke fitt, the said Companies to be vnder the Gouvernement and Authority of them the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant And In regard of the Extraordinary Licentiousnes that hath benn Lately used In things of this nature, Our Pleasure, Is, that there shall bee noe more Places of Representations nor Companies of Actors of Playes or Operas by Recitative, musick or Representations by dancing and Scenes or any other Entertainments on the Stage In ovr Citties of London and Westminster or in the Liberties of them, then the two, to be now Erected by vertue of this Authority, Neuertheless wee doe Hereby by our Authority Royall strictly eniune the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant that they doe not at any time hereafter cause to be acted or represented any Play, Enterlude, or opera Containing any Matter of Prophanation, Scurrility, or Obscenity, And wee doe further Hereby authorise and command them the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant to peruse all playes that haue benn formerly written and to expunge all Prophanesse and Scurrility from the same, before they be represented or Acted, And this Our Grante and Authority made to the said Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant, shall be effectuell and Remaine in full force and vertue, Notwithstanding any former order or direction by vs Giuen, for the Suppressing of Play-houses and playes or any other Entertainments of the Stage, Giuen August 21st 1660.

“Copy of the grante the 21 August. 60. made to Mister

Thomas Killegrew and Sir William Davenant by the Kings Maiesty vnder the Priuy Signett.”\*

The Patents granted by the King to Davenant and Killigrew soon provoked a serious and prolonged opposition from the official who had hitherto enjoyed the prerogative of forbidding or allowing such plays as he thought fit, at the expense of actors and authors. Not without a struggle was this office with its emoluments to be relinquished; the King's license struck directly and vitally at it, and unless his majesty could be prevailed upon to withdraw it, Sir Henry Herbert's occupation was gone. We find him, in consequence, shewing fight in the most determined manner, and in spite of what the King had done, issuing an order to both Companies forbidding them to play without his authority.

In the collection of Haslewood Manuscripts already quoted from, we find the following:—

“Whereas by vertue of a Grante vnder the Greate Seale of England, Playes, Players and Play-makers, and the Permission for Errecting of Playhouses have been allowed, Ordered and Permitted by the Masters of his Maiesties Office of the Revells my Predecessors successively time out of minde whereof the memory of mann is not to the Contrary, And by mee for almost fforty yeares with exception only to the Late times.

“These are therefore in his Maiesties name to require you to attende me concerning your Playhouse called the Cockpitt Playhouse in Drury Lane, And to bring with you such Authority As you have for Erecting of the said house, Into

\* From the Haslewood MSS.

a Playhouse at your perill, Given at his Majesties Office of the Revells the 8th day of October, 1660."

Henry Herbert.

"To Mister John Roades at the Cockpitt  
Playhouse in Drury Lane.

"Warrant sent to Rhodes and brought backe by him the 10th of October, 1660, with this Answer that the Kinge did authorize Him."

In addition to the above, in fact before it, he had petitioned as follows :—

"To the Kings most Excellent Maiestie  
The humble petition of Sir Henry Herbert, Knight Master  
of your Maiesties Office of the Revells,  
Sheweth

"That whereas your petitioner by vertue of severall graunts vnder the great seale of England hath executed the said Office as a Master of the Revells for about 40 yeares in the times of King James and of King Charles, both of blessed memory with excepcion only to the time of the late horrid rebellion.

"And whereas the ordering of plaies, players and play makers, and the permission for erecting of playhouses are Peculiar branches of the said Office and in the constant Practice thereof by your petitioner's Predecessors in the said Office and himselfe with excepcion only as before excepted and authorised by graunt vnder the said great seale of England, and that no person or persons haue erected any Playhouses or raised any Company of Players without Licence from your petitioner's said Predecessors or from your petitioner But Sir William Davenant, Knight, who obtained Leaue of Oliuer and Richard Cromwell to vent his

Operas in a time when your petitioner owned not their Authority.

“And whereas your Maieſty hath lately ſignified your pleaſure by warrant to Sir Jeffery Palmer, Knight and Barronet your Maieſties Attorney Generall for the drawing of a graunt for your Maieſties ſignature to paſſe the great ſeale thereby to enable and impower Miſter Thomas Killigrew and the ſaid Sir William Dauenant to erect two new Playhouſes in London, Weſtminſter, or the Subburbs thereof but ſuch as the ſaid Miſter Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant ſhall allow of.

“And whereas your petitioner hath been repreſented to your Maieſty as a perſon conſenting to the ſaid powers expreſſed in the ſaid Warrant, your petitioner vtterly denies the leaſt Conſent or foreknowledge thereof but look vpon it as an vniuſt ſurpriſe and diſtructive to the powers graunted vnder the ſaid great ſeale to your petitioner and to the Conſtant practice of the ſaid Office, and executed in the ſaid Office ever ſince Players were firſt admitted by authority to act plaies, and cannot legally bee done as your petitioner is adviſed by a new graunt to take away and cut off a branch of the antient powers graunted to the ſaid Office vnder the great ſeale.

“Your petitioner therefore humbly praies that your Maieſty would bee iuſtly as graciously pleaſed to reuoke the ſaid Warrant from your Maieſties ſaid Attorney Generall, Or to refer the premises to the conſideracion of your Maieſties ſaid Attorney Generall to Certify your Maieſty of the truth of them and his Judgment, on the whole matters in queſtion betwixt the ſaid Miſter Killigrew, Sir William Dauenant, and your petitioner in relation to

the Legallity and consequence of theire demaunds and your petitioners rights.

“ And your petitioner shall ever pray, etc.”

“ At the Court at Whitchall, 4 Augusti, 1660.

“ His Maiestie is pleased to referre this Peticion to Sir Jeffery Palmer, Knight and Baronet, his Maiesties Attorney generall; who, having called before him all Persons concerned, and examined the Peticioners right is to certify what hee finds to bee the true state of the matters in difference, together with his opinion thereupon. And then his Maiestie will declare his further pleasure.

“ Edward Nicholas.”

“ May it please your most excellent Maiesty.

“ Although I haue heard the Parties concerned in this Petition seuerally and apart, yct in respect Mister Killigrew and Sir William Dauenant haueing notice of a time appointed to heare all parties together did not come; I have forborne to proceede further; haueing alsoe receaued an intimacion by Letter from Sir William Dauenant that I was freed from further hearing this matter.

“ G. Palmer.

“ 14 Sept., 1660.”

Just here for the better understanding of the true position of things, it will be advantageous to insert the King's renewal of the old Patents to Davenant and Killigrew.

“ 15 January, 14 Car. 2. 1662.

“ A Copy of the Letters Patents then granted by King Charles 2., under the Great Seal of England, to Sir William Davenant, Knt., his Heirs and Assigns, for erecting a new



theatre, and establishing of a Company of Aetors in any place within London or Westminster, or the suburbs of the same ; and that no other but this Company, and one other Company by virtue of a like Patent, to Thomas Killigrew, Esqr., should be permitted within the said Liberties."

"Charles the Second, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom all these Presents shall come Greeting.

"Whereas Our Royal Father, of glorious memory, by his Letters Patents under his Great Seal of England, bearing date at Westminster, the 26th day of March, in the 14th year of his reign, did give and grant unto Sir William Davenant (by the name of William Davenant, Gent.) his Heirs, Exeutors, Administrators, and Assigns, full power, licence, and authority, that he, they, and every one of them, by him and themselves, and by all and every such person and persons as he or they should depute or appoint, and his and their labourers, servants and workmen, should and might, lawfully, quietly, and peaceably, frame, erect, new-build, and set up, upon a parcel of ground lying near unto or behind the Three Kings' Ordinary in Fleetstreet, in the parishes of St. Dunstan's in the West, London, or in St. Bride's, London, or in either of them, or in any other ground in or about that place, or in the whole street aforesaid, then allotted to him for that use ; or in any other place that was, or then after should be, assigned or allotted out to the said Sir William Davenant, by Thomas, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, then Earl Marshal of England, or any other Commissioner for building, for the time being in that behalf, a Theatre or Play-house, with necessary tiring and retiring rooms and other places convenient, containing in



the whole forty yards square at the most, wherein Plays, Musical Entertainments, Scenes, or other, the like presentments, might be presented. And our said Royal Father did grant unto the said Sir William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, and Administrators, and Assigns, that it should and might be lawful to, and for him the said Sir William Davenant, his Heirs, Administrators and Assigns, from time to time, to gather together, entertain, govern, privilege, and to keep such and so many Players and persons to exercise Actions, Musical Presentments, Scenes, Dancing, and the Like, as he the said Sir William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators or Assigns, should think fit and approve for the said House ; and such persons to permit and continue at and during the pleasure of the said Sir William Davenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators or Assigns, from time to time to act plays in such House so to be by him or them erected, and exercise Musick, Musical Presentments, Scenes, Dancing, or other the like, at the same or other houses or times, or after Plays are ended, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as should desire to see the same : and that it should and might be lawful to and for the said Sir William Davenant, his Heirs, Administrators, and Assigns, to take and receive of such as should resort to see or hear any such Plays, Scenes and Entertainments whatsoever, such sum or sums of money as were, or then after from time to time should be, accustomed to be given or taken in other Playhouses and places, for the like Plays, Scenes, Presentments, and Entertainments, as in and by the said Letters Patents, relation being thereunto had, more at large may appear.

“ And whercas, We did, by our Letters Patents, under the Great Seal of England, bearing date the 16th day of May, in the 13th year of our reign, exemplify the said recited Letters Patents granted by our Royal Father, as in and by the same, relation being thereunto had, at large may appear:

“ And whereas the said Sir William Dauenant hath surrendered our said Letters Patents of Exemplification, and also the said recited Letters Patents granted by Our Royal Father, into our Court of Chancery, to be cancelled; which surrender We have accepted, and do accept by these Presents :

“ Know ye that we, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and meer motion, and upon the humble petition of the said Sir William Davenant, and in consideration of the good and faithful service which he the said Sir William Dauenant hath done unto us, and doth intend to do for the future, and in consideration of the said surrender, have given and granted, and, by these Presents, for Us, our Heirs and Successors, do give and grant unto the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, full power, licence, and authority, that he, they, and every one of them, by him and themselves, and by all and every such person and persons as he or they should depute or appoint, and his or their labourers, servants and workmen, shall and may lawfully, peaceably and quietly, frame, erect, new-build, and set up, in any place within our cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof, where he or they shall find best accommodation for that purpose, to be assigned and allotted out by the surveyor of our works, one Theatre or Playhouse, with necessary tiring and retiring rooms and other places convenient, of such extent and dimensions as the said Sir William Daucnant, his Heirs and

Assigns, shall think fitting; wherein Tragedies, Comedies, Plays, Operas, Musick, Scenes, and all other Entertainments of the Stage whatsoever may be shewed and presented.

“And we do hereby, for Us, our Heirs and Suceessors, grant unto the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs and Assigns, full power, lieenee, and authority, from time to time, to gather together, entertain, govern, privilege, and keep, such and so many Players and persons, to exercise and act Tragedies, Comedies, Plays, Operas, and other Performances of the Stage, within the house to be built as aforesaid, or within the house in Lineolns-Inn Fields wherein the said Sir William Dauenant doth now exercise the premises, or within any other house where he or they can best be fitted for that purpose, within our cities of London and Westminster or the suburbs thereof; which said Company shall be the servants of our dearly beloved brother James Duke of York, and shall consist of such number as the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs or Assigns, shall from time to time think meet, and such persons to permit and continue, at and during the pleasure of the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs or Assigns, from time to time to act Plays and Entertainments of the Stage of all sorts, peaceably and quietly, without the impeachment or impediment of any person or persons whatsoever, for the honest recreation of such as shall desire to see the same.

“And it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs and Assigns, to take and receive of such our subiects as shall resort to see or hear any such Plays, Scenes, and Entertainments whatsoever, such sum or sums of money as either haue accustomedly been giuen and taken in the like kind, or as shall be thought reasonable by him or them, in regard of the great expenees

of scenes, musick, and such new decorations, as have not been formerly used.

“And further, for Us, our Heirs and Successors, We do hereby give and grant unto the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs and Assigns, full power to make such allowances, out of that which he shall so receive by the acting of Plays and Entertainments of the Stage as aforesaid, to the actors and other persons employed in acting, representing, or in any quality whatsoever about the said theatre, as he or they shall think fit; and that the said Company shall be under the sole government and authority of the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs and Assigns. And all scandalous and mutinous persons shall, from time to time, be by him and them ejected and disabled from playing in the said Theatre.

“And for that We are informed, that diuers companics of players have taken upon them to act Plays publicly in our said cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof, without any authority for that purpose: We do hereby declare our dislike of the same; and will and grant, that only the said Company erected and set up or to be erected and set up, by the said Sir William Dauenant, his Heirs and Assigns, by virtue of these Presents, and one other Company erected and set up, or to be erected and set up, by Thomas Killigrew, Esqr., his heirs and Assigns, and none other, shall from henceforth act or represent Comedies, Tragedies, Plays or Entertainments of the Stage within our said Cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof; which said Company to be erected by the said Thomas Killigrew, his Heirs and Assigns, shall be subject to his and their government and authority, and shall be styled the Company of Us and Our Royal Consort.

“And the better to preserve amity and correspondency betwixt the said Companies, and that the one may not inroach upon the other by any indirect means, We will and ordain, that no Actor or other Person employed about either of the said Theatres, erected by the said Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, or either of them, or deserting his Company, shall be receiued by the Gouvernor or any of the said other Company, or any other person or persons to be employed in acting, or in any matter relating to the Stage, without the consent and approbation of the Gouvernour of the Company whereof the said person so ejected or deserting was a member, signified under his hand and seal. And we do by these Presents, declare all other Company and Companies, saving the two Companies before mentioned, to be silenced and suppressed.

“And forasmuch as many Plays, formerly acted, do contain seuerall prophane, obscene, and scurrilous passages; and the women’s parts therein haue been acted by men in the habits of women, at which some haue taken offence; for the preventry of these abuses for the future, We do hereby straitly charge, and command and enjoin, that from henceforth no new Play shall be acted by either of the said Companies, containing any passages offensive to piety and good manners, nor any old or revived Play, containing any such offensive passages as aforesaid, until the same shall be corrected and purged by the said Masters or Governours of the said respective Companies from all such offensive and scandalous passages as aforesaid. And We do likewise permit and give leave that all the women’s parts to be acted in either of the said two Companies for the time to come may be performed by women, so long as these recreations, which, by reason of the abuses aforesaid, were scandalous

and offensive, may by such reformation be esteemed not only harmless delights, but useful and instructive representations of human life, to such of Our good subjects as shall resort to see the same.

“ And these our Letters Patent, or the inrollment thereof, shall be in all things good and effectual in the law, according to the true intent and meaning of the same, any thing in these presents contained, or any Law, Statute, Act, Ordinance, Proclamation, Provision, Restriction, or any other matter, cause or thing whatsoever, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding ; although express mention of the true yearly value, or certainty of the premises, or of any of them, or of any other gifts or grants by Us, or by any of Our Progenitors or Predecessors heretofore made to the said Sir William Dauenant in these Presents, is not made, or any other Statute, Act, Ordinance, Provision, Proclamation, or Restriction, heretofore had, made, enacted, ordained, or provided, or any other matter, cause, or thing whatsoever, to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

“ In Witness whereof, We have caused these our letters to be made Patents. Witness Ourselves, at Westminster, the 15th day of January in the fourteenth year of our reign.

“ By the King.

“ Howard.”

In defiance of the Royal Patents, which he affirmed to be illegal, Sir Henry Herbert, in October, proceeded to commence actions at law against Davenant, Killigrew, Betterton and others, in some of which he was successful, while failing in others.



“ Sir Henry Herbert’s Answer

“ Master of His Maiesties office of the Reuells.

“ That the Licensinge and Orderinge of Playes, Players and Playmakers and for Erecting of Playhouses Is an Antient Branche of His Maiesties office of the Reuells and hath ben soly exercised by the present master of the Renells and His Predecessors tyme out of minde, with exception only to the time of the Late Horrid Rebellion when sir Henry Herbert owned not their uniust and Tyrannicall Authority, thogh sir William Dauenant did and obteyned then Leaue to uente his Operas.

“ That the Grante of the fornamed Powers Is Destrvtive to the Powers granted under the Greate Scale to sir Henry Herbert by the Late Kinge of Blessed Memory, And to the constant practise of the said office.

“ That it is Destructive to a Hundred Persons at Least that depende upon the Quality and the Houses and Have noe other Liuelyhood.

“ That It cannot Legally be done As Councell doth Aduise and being granted begets a Suite at Law upon the Ualidity of the Grantes.”\*

In order to get as comprehensive a view as possible of Betterton’s career as an actor, we annex the following document which will no doubt be regarded with interest by all who desire to make themselves acquainted with the life of that great performer.

“ Sir Henry Herbert Knight and Symon Thelwall Esquire plaintiffs and Thomas Betterton defendant in an Accion of the case.

\* Haslewood MSS.



“The plaintiffs declare that whereas within this realme of England to witt at London in the parish of St. Mary Bowe in the ward of Cheape there is and time out of minde hath been an office of the Master of the Reuells and Masks of our Lord the King his heires and successors To which said office and to which said Master or Masters by vertue of that office the liceneeing alloweing ouerseing and eorrection of all and singular Common Actors of Playes and of all Stage Playes by them Acted by the whole time aforesaid haue belonged and appertained and doe yett belonge and apperteine for the executing of which said office the Masters of the Reucells and Masks aforesaid for the time being from time to time dureing the whole time aforesaid haue had and receiued and haue aecustomed to haue and receiue of the Common Actors of Playes aforesaid for the time being diuers fees profitts and emoluments for the licenccing and allowing the said stage Playes which said office together with all fees profitts and emoluments to the same office belonging and appertening by the whole time aforesaid was giuen and graunted and hath been aecustomed to be given and graunted by our Lord the King now and his predecessors Kings and Queens of England for the time being to any person or persons willing to exereise the said office: And whereas Queen Elizabeth by her letters Patents vnder the great scale dated at Westminster the 24th of July in the 21st yeare of her Reigne did graunt the said office to Edmund Tilney Esquire habendum the said office to the said Edmund for his life to be excreised by him or his deputy: By vertue whereof the said Edmond was seized of the said office as of his franktenement for his life and being soe seized King James by his litters Patents vnder the great seale the 23rd of June in the first yeare of his Reigne

ouer England did graunt to George Bucke then Esquire and afterwards Knight the said office Habendum the said office to him for his life to be exercised by himself or his deputy from the time of the death of the said Edmond Tilney or as soon as the said office should become void by surrender forfeiture or any other legall manner. And that afterwards the 20th of August 1610 the said Edmond Tilney died after whose death the said George Bucke by vertue of the said graunte of the office was thereof seized as of his freehold for the terme of his life And being soe seized King James by his Letters Patents vnder the great seale the 3rd of Aprill in the 10th yeare of his Reigne did graunt the said office to John Ashley Knight Habendum to him from the death of the said George Bucke or as soone as the said office by resignacion surrender or other lawfull way should become void for the terme of his life to be exercised by himselfe or deputy. And whereas alsoe King James by his other Letters Patents the 5th of October in the 19th yeare of his Reigne graunted the said office to Beniamin Johnson gentleman for his life from the death of the said George Bucke and John Ashley or as soon as the said office by resignacion or surrender or other lawful manner should become void after which graunt to witt the 20th of September 1623 the said George Bucke dyed after whose death John Ashley by vertue of the said graunt of the office was seized thereof as of his freehold for his life, And being soe seized and the said Beniamin Johnson then aliuie the late King Charles by his Letters Patents vnder the great seale the 22nd of August in the 5th yeare of his Reigne of his certaine knowledge and mere moeion for himself his heirs and successors did giuo and graunt to the plaintiffs the said office Habendum to them for their liues and the life of the longer liuer of them

after the death of the said John Ashley and Benjamin and as soon as the said office by resignacion surrender forfeiture or other lawfull meanes should become void with all mancion houses Regards profitts rights liberties and advantages to the same office belonging or apperteining And afterwards to witt the 20th of Nouember 1635 Benjamin Johnson dyed and on the 13th of January 1640 the said John Ashley dyed after whose deaths the plaintiffs tooke vpon them the said office and from thence hitherto haue endeauoured faithfully and diligently to exercise the same and to haue and receiue the vails fees profitts and aduantages to the said office belonging And that the defendant intending to hinder the plaintiffs in the vse and exercise of their said office and to depriue and exclude them of the fees vailes regards profitts and aduantages to the same office belonging between the 15th of Nouember in the 12th year of the Reigne of our now Lord the King and the day of the bringing the plaintiffs Originall writt to witt the sixth of May in the 14th year of this King at London aforesaid in the parish and ward aforesaid the said defendant with diuers other persons vniustly and without the licence or allowance of the said plaintiffs or either of them and against their wills did Act diuers stage Playes as well new Playes as reuiued Playes to witt 10 new playes and 100 reuiued Playes the fees for the licenceing and allowing thereof due to the plaintiffs or either of them not being paid And this they lay to their damage Cli.

“The defendant by Henry Salman his Attorney hath pleaded not guilty.”

“Herbert and Thelwall versus Betterton,

“Declaration, May 6, 16[62].” \*

\* From the Haslewood MSS.

Wearied with the contest which had thus been going on for something like two years, Sir William Davenant at last sought the interposition of the king and petitioned as follows :—

“ To the King’s most Sacred Majesty

“ The humble Petition of Sir William Davenant Knight Sheweth,

“ That your Petitioner has been molested by Sir Henry Harbert with severall prosecutions at Law.

“ That those prosecutions have not proceeded by your Petitioners default of not paying the said Henry Harbert his pretended Fees (he neuer hauing sent for any to your Petitioner) but because your Petitioner hath publicquely presented Plaies; notwithstanding he is authorised therevnto by Pattent from your Majesties most royall Father, and by seuerall warrants vnder your Majesties royal hand and signet.

“ That your Petitioner (to prevent being out Lawd) has bin enforc’d to answer him in Two Tryals at Law, in one of which, at Westminster, your petitioner hath had a Verdict against him, where it was declard’ that he hath no jurisdiction over any plaiers, nor any right to demand fees of them. In the other (by a London Jury) the master of Revels was allowd’ the correction of plaies and Fees for soc doing; but not to give Plaiers any licence or authoritic to play, it being proved that no Plaiers were ever authorized in London or Westminster, to play by the Commission of the Master of Revels, but by authoritic immediately from the Crowne. Neither was the proportion of Fees then determined or made certaine because severall witnesses affirmed that Variety of paymentes had bin made; sometimes of a Noble, sometimes of Twenty, and afterwards of Forty shillings for correcting a

new Play, and that it was the custome to pay nothing for supervising revived Plaies.

“That without any authoritie given him by that last Verdict, he sent the day after the tryall, a prohibition vnder his hand and seale (directed to the Plaiers in Little Lincolnes Inn fields) to forbid them to act Plaies any more.

“Therefore your Petitioner humbly prays that your Majesty will graciously please (Two Verdicts having pass’d at Common Law contradicting each other) to referre the Case to the examination of such honorable persons as may certify your Majesty of the just authoritie of the Master of Revells, that so his Fees (if any be due to him) may be made certaine to prevent extortion; and time prescribd’ how long he shall keep plaies in his hands; in pretence of correcting them; and whether he can demand Fees for revived Plaies; and lastly, how long Plaies may be layd asyde ere he shall judge them to be reviv’d.

“And your Petitioner (as in duty bound) shall euer pray, &c.”\*

The king’s answer was to the effect that desiring to promote a just and friendly agreement between the litigating parties, he was pleased to refer the petition to the Lord high Chancellor of England and the Lord Chamberlain, who were to call before them all who might be concerned in the matter and make a fair and amicable accommodation between them, or otherwise certify his Majesty the true state of this business, together with their Lordship’s opinions.

The end of all this strife and recrimination and opposition

\* Haslewood MSS.

to the king's authority was, as might have been anticipated, the royal will proved supreme, and Davenant, Betterton, Killigrew and the rest, were free to exercise the rights and privileges conferred upon them by their Patents.

## CHAPTER II.

Portugal-Street — The Lincoln's-Inn Fields theatre, its history, its final destruction—Opening of Davenant's theatre here—Opera, Second part of the Siege of Rhodes, Betterton as Solyman the Magnificent—Play of the Witts in 1661, Betterton as Elder Palatine—Hamlet at Portugal Street, Betterton as the Prince—Betterton as Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night, in 1661—Love and Honour—The Bondman, Pepys' delight on account of Betterton's performance—Cutter of Coleman Street, Betterton as Colonel Jolly—The Law against Lovers—Romeo and Juliet, Betterton as Mercutio—Duchess of Malfy—The Villain.

PARALLEL with the south side of Lincoln's-Inn Fields, and immediately behind the houses and public buildings standing in that part of the square, lies Portugal-Street. Gay as any thoroughfare of its size and character was it in the olden time, when the pleasure loving citizens of the metropolis and suburbs, came flocking thither to witness the performances of the last, though not the least, of the old company of actors ; now it is quiet to a degree, King's College Hospital occupying a considerable portion of its southern side, and the dead back wall of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, with a few stationers' shops, its northern side.

Here, at the period we are writing about, on a part of the site of the building holding the magnificent collection of



anatomical specimens and preparations commenced by the celebrated Hunter, stood the Lincoln's Inn Theatre, and, according to the rate books of St. Clement Danes, for 1668, the residences of a number of noble and distinguished personages. The Earl of Rochester, among others, lived here, and he tells one of his correspondents "If you write to me, direct to Lincoln's Inn Fields, the house next to the Duke Playhouse, in Portugal Row, there lives your humble servant."

Altogether there have been three theatres on this spot, which was originally a tennis court. The first was called the Duke's theatre, from the Duke of York who was its chief patron, and also the Opera, on account of its musical performances. After undergoing considerable alterations, it came into the hands of Sir William Davenant, who opened it in 1662, with his operatic piece the "Siege of Rhodes." In 1671 and 2, the actors removed to Dorset Gardens, and the King's Company, burnt out of Drury Lane, took possession of it for a year, after which it reverted to its former use, and again became a tennis court.

In 1695, it was once more a theatre for a time, but was taken down in the early part of the 18th century, a new one erected on its site, "built," says Timbs, "for Christopher Rich, and opened by John Rich in 1714." In 1732 Rich abandoned it for Covent Garden, and it was used for all kinds of purposes, as the proprietors could let it.

In 1735, Mr. Gifford took possession, keeping it open for about two years, after which it was closed. Tradition has handed down the following story in connection with the final shutting up of the theatre:—"Upon a representation of the pantomime of Harlequin and Dr. Faustus, when a tribe of demons, necessary for the piece, were assembled, a super-

numenary devil was observed, who not approving of going out in a complaisant manner at the door, to show a devil's trick, flew up to the ceiling, made his way through the tiling, and tore away one fourth of the house, which circumstance so affrighted the manager, that the proprietor had not courage to open the house ever afterwards."

The building then became a barrack, then an auction room, and afterwards the china-ware repository of Messrs. Copeland and Spode, being finally taken down in 1848 for the enlargement of the museum of the College of Surgeons, the front of which building is adorned with some columns which are said to have formed part of the theatre.

The name Portugal Street, of course reminds us of the unhappy wife of Charles the Second, Catherine of Portugal; and Portsmouth Street, a narrow thoroughfare at its western end, of his notorious court favourite, the Duchess of Portsmouth.

It is generally stated that Davenant opened his theatre in Portugal Street, in the year 1662, but from entries in Pepys' diary, this seems incorrect. He makes it 1661, and on July 2nd of that year we have:—

"Went to Sir William Davenant's Opera, this being the fourth day it hath begun, and the first that I have seen it. To day was acted the second part of the Siege of Rhodes."

The Cast in this play was:—

Solyman the Magnificent.....	Betterton.
Alphonso .....	Harris.
Villierius (the Grand Master) .....	Lilliston.
The Admiral.....	Blagden.
Roxalana .....	Mrs. Davenport.
Ianthe .....	Mrs. Saunderson.

"All the parts were justly and excellently performed, and the play was acted 12 days together without interruption and with great applause."\*

August 15th, 1661, Pepys' again writes :—

"Walked to the Wardrobe and dined with my lady, thence to the opera which begins again to-day with the 'Witts,' never acted yet with scenes ; and the King, and Duke, and Duchess were there—it is a most excellent play and admirable scenes."

Downes, who was himself acting at Sir William Davenant's house at the opening, gives the Cast thus :—

Elder Palatine.....	Betterton.
Younger Palatine .....	Harris.
Sir M. Thwack.....	Underhill.
Lady Ample.....	Mrs. Davenport.

and he says, "All the parts being exactly performed, it continued 8 days acting, successively."

Genest says, "Hamlet, and Love and Honour, were certainly revived soon after Davenant opened his theatre, as Downes does not exactly say when a revived play was performed, it is impossible to ascertain the point precisely." A reference to Pepys, however, clears up the difficulty, at least so far as Hamlet is concerned, for we have entered for August 24th, 1661 :

"To the Opera and there saw Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, done with scenes very well ; but above all, Betterton did the Prince's part beyond imagination."

\* Downes,

The Cast in Hamlet was :—

Hamlet.....	Betterton.
Horatio .....	Harris.
The King .....	Lilliston.
Ghost.....	Richards.
Polonius.....	Lovel.
Rosencrans .....	Dixon.
Guilderstern.....	Price.
1st Grave maker .....	Underhill.
2nd do. do. ....	Dacres.
Queen .....	Mrs. Davenport.
Ophelia .....	Mrs. Saunderson.

“ No succeeding tragedy, for several years, got more reputation or money to the company than this.”\*

Downes mentions “Twelfth Night, or what you will,” a play of Shakespeare’s, as having a mighty success by its performance. He gives no date, though a note says it was got up on purpose to be acted on Twelfth-night.

It seems to have escaped Genest’s notice altogether, but an entry in Pepys, at any rate fixes one night on which it was performed.

“Sept. 11th, 1661. Walking through Lincoln’s Inn Fields, observed at the Opera a new play, “Twelfth Night,” was acted there, and the King there: so I, against my own mind and resolution, could not forbear to go in, which did make the play seem a burthen to me, and I took no pleasure at all in it.”

\* Downes.

The Cast was :—

Sir Toby Belch..... Betterton.  
 Sir Andrew Aguecheek... Harris.  
 Fool..... Underhill.  
 Malvolio the Steward.... Lovel.  
 Olivia..... Mrs. Ann Gibbs.

“All the parts,” observes Downes, “being justly acted, crowned the play.”

With respect to “Love and Honour,” a tragi-comedy by Sir William Davenant, Genest is in ignorance about the date, as he was with Hamlet. Again, we turn to Pepys and for October 21st, 1661, of the Diary we have :—

“To the Opera which is now newly begun to act again after some alteration of their scene, which do make it very much worse; but the play (Love and Honour,) being the first time of their acting it, is a very good plot, and well done.”

Downes gives us the cast, but says nothing of the date, the above however not only fixes when it was played, but, when it was played the first time.

“This play was richly cloathed, the King giving Mr. Betterton his Coronation Suit, in which he acted the part of Prince Alvaro; the Duke of York giving Mr. Harris his, who did Prince Prospero; and my Lord of Oxford gave Mr. Joseph Price his, who did Lionel, the Duke of Parma’s son; the Duke was acted by Mr. Lilliston; Evandra, by Mrs. Davenport; and all the other parts being very well done: the play having a great run, produced to the Company great gain and estimation from the Town.”\*

\* Downes.

“Nov. 4th, 1661. With my wife to the Opera, where we saw ‘The Bondman,’ which of old we both did so doate on, and do still; though to both our thinking not so well acted here, having too great expectations, as formerly at Salisbury Court. But for Betterton, he is called by us both, the best actor in the world.”

The Bondman was an ancient story by Massinger, acted at the Cockpit, Drury Lane. It was considered a very excellent tragedy. The scene lies at Syracuse, and the plot of the slaves being seduced to rebellion by Pisander, and reduced by Timoleon, and their flight at the sight of the whips, is borrowed from the story of the Scythian Slaves’ rebellion against their masters.

Pepys’ Diary, Dec. 16th, 1661. “After dinner to the Opera, where there was a new play, Cutter of Coleman Street, made in the year 1658, with reflections much upon the late times; and it being the first time, the pay was doubled, and so to save money, my wife and I went into the gallery, and there sat and saw very well; and a very good play it is—it seems of Cowley’s making.”

Cast :—

Colonel Jolly.....	Betterton.
Cutter .....	Underhill.
Worm .....	Sandford.
Puny .....	Nokes.
Truman Senior.....	Lovel.
Truman Junior.....	Harris.
Parson Soaker .....	Dacres.
Will .....	Price.
Aurelia .....	Mrs. Betterton.

Lucia..... Mrs. Gibbs.  
Jane ..... Mrs. Long.

“Acted so perfectly well,” says Downes, “that it was performed a whole week with a full audience.”

Cutter in old language meant a swaggerer, hence the title of this play. The author of it, Abraham Cowley, was charged with an intent to ridicule the Cavaliers, which charge he defended himself against. It was considered a very good play, though it had been rejected at first; when it was resumed it was acted with considerable applause. Originally it was called the Guardian, and was acted before the Prince when he passed through Cambridge on his way to York in 1641. Cowley says it was neither written nor acted, but rough drawn by him and repeated by the scholars.

The scene of the play was London, and a good deal of humourous ridicule was in it heaped upon the prevailing fanatical principles of the times. Some writers say it was without reason considered a satire upon the Cavaliers, and Cowley in his preface wrote, “That having belonged to that party all the time of their misfortunes, he must be a madman to choose that of their restoration to quarrel with them.”

Dennis joins Downes in saying that the play was performed a whole week with a full audience.

Cutter is said to be a better play than its original the Guardian, a greater part of the dialogue having been written afresh, and the plot improved while not very materially altered.

A note in the Roscius Anglicanus, says, “This play was not a little injurious to the Cavalier indigent Officers,



especially the characters of Cutter and Worm. Being a temporary satire, it was soon banished the theatre, notwithstanding it had the great name of Cowley to support it.

"February 18th, 1662," says Pepys, "I went to the Opera, and saw the 'Law Against Lovers,' a good play and well performed, especially the little girls, whom I never saw act before, dancing and singing; and were it not for her, the losse of Roxalana would spoil the house."

It is generally believed that Betterton played some part in this piece, but the Cast not being to hand we are unable to say what. Genest calls the play a "bad alteration of 'Measure for Measure,' with the characters of Benedick and Beatrice added to it, the greater part of what they say, however, not being from Shakespear—Davenant having added a good deal of his own, most of which, particularly the serious part, being poor stuff in comparison with the original, at the same time, enough of Shakespear being retained to make this a good play on the whole." The *Biographica Dramatica* says it was a play that met with great success, that the characters, and almost the whole language of the piece, are borrowed from that divine author Shakespear, and that all Davenant did was to blend the circumstances of both plays together, so as to form some connexion between the plots and to soften and moderize those passages of the language which appeared rough or obsolete.

March 1st, 1662, Pepys writes:—"My wife and I by coach, first to see my little picture that is a drawing, and thence to the Opera, and there saw Romco and Juliet, the first time it was ever acted, but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do, and I am resolved to go no more to see the

first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less."

The Cast was :—

Romeo .....	Harris.
Mercutio.....	Betterton.
Count Paris.. ..	Price.
The Fryar.....	Richards.
Sampson .....	Sandford.
Gregory.....	Underhill.
Juliet.....	Mrs. Saunderson.
Count Paris's Wife ...	Mrs. Holden.

There is a silly and improper story connected with Mrs. Holden related by Downes and repeated by Davies, but under protest, that had it been observed when the advertisement to the new edition of Roscius Anglicanus was written it would have been omitted, but that the advertisement setting out that the Original was faithfully followed, it had been retained. Davies, however, proceeds to show its utter absurdity, and any one desiring to see the statement, must refer to his Note, on page 31 of the 1789 edition.

Sept. 30th, 1662, Pepys writes :—"To the Duke's playhouse where we saw 'The Duchess of Malfy,' well performed, but Betterton and Ianthé to admiration."

This was a tragedy by John Webster, and Downes says, "It was so excellently acted in all parts; chiefly Duke Ferdinand and Bolsola; it filled the house 8 days successively, it proving one of the best of stock tragedies."

October 20th, 1662, Pepys writes :—"By and by up to the Duke, who was making himself ready, and there young Killigrew did so commend 'The Villaine,' a new play made

by Tom Porter, and acted only on Saturday at the Duke's-House, as if there had never been any such play come upon the stage. The same yesterday was told me by Captain Ferrers, and this morning afterwards by Dr. Clark, who saw it."

Genest gives October 20, as the day on which The Villain was brought out at the Duke's, evidently he should have written the 18th, for the 20th was a Monday, and Pepys writing on that day says the play came out on the Saturday.

It had a great and unexpected success, drawing full houses for ten days.

The two heroes of the piece were Betterton, who played Monsieur Brisac, and Sandford, who played the Villain; the latter is said by Langbaine to have performed the part of Maligni (the Villain) *incomparably*, and Aston remarks that "he acted strongly with his face," and as King Charles said "was the best villain in the world."

## CHAPTER III.

Changes in theatrical tactics—Use of scenery in plays—Earliest notices of scenery for the stage in England—Early scenery described—Davenant not the originator of scenery, but the reviver of it—Meaning of the term *scene* in certain plays—Authority of Fleckno—Testimony of Phillips in his “*Theatrum Poetarum*”—Opposition to the use of scenery, attempts to account for the same—Davenant’s determination in favour of scenery—Gildon’s support of Davenant—The Athenian Stage—Employment of women upon the stage—Men players of women’s parts in the English, Greek, and Roman Stages—Opposition to the movement—Lord Macaulay’s denunciation—Opinion divided in the 17th century—Nash’s tirade—The first woman on the stage.

AT this period in the history of the English stage, two very important changes were made in theatrical tactics, and which were destined to exercise a wide and lasting influence upon dramatic performances, they were the employment of women as actresses, the female parts having previously been undertaken by men, and the increased use of scenery. We say the *increased* use of scenery, for it is a fact that such adornments had to a limited extent been used long before this time. Downes speaks very unguardedly about this in the *Roscus Anglicanus*. He says:—“His Company being now compleat, Sir William, in order to prepare Plays to open his Theatre, it being then a Building in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields, reharsed the First and Second Part of

the Siege of Rhodes, and the Wits at Apothecaries' Hall ; and in Spring, 1662 (?) opened his house with the said Plays having new Scenes and Decorations, being the first that e'er were introduced in England." This certainly was not the time when scenery was first used on the stage, it had previously been used in private theatrical exhibitions, though perhaps of very crude and imperfect construction. Four years before, an entertainment had been presented called "the Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru, exprest by vocal and instrumental musick, and by Art of Perspective in Scenes." This was represented daily at the Cockpit in Drury Lane in 1658, "a performance," says Davies in his note to Downes, "which Cromwell, from his hatred to the Spaniards, permitted, though he had prohibited all other theatrical exhibitions."

The first notice to be found of anything like moveable scenes being used in England, is in the narrative of the entertainment given to King James at Oxford, in August, 1605, when three plays were performed in the hall of Christ Church, of which the following account is given by a contemporary writer :—"The Stage was built close to the upper end of the hall, as it seemed at the first sight ; but indeed it was but a false wall faire painted, and adorned with stately pillars, which pillars would turn about ; by reason whereof, with the help of other painted clothes, their stage did vary three times in the acting of one tragedy."\* This writer also says, "The same day, Aug. 28th, after supper, about nine of the clock, they began to act the tragedy of Ajax Flagellifer, wherein the stage varied three times. They had all goodly antique apparell, but for all that, it was not acted so well by many degrees as I had scen it in Cambridge. The King was very wearie before he came

thither, but much more wearied by it, and spoke many words of dislike."

That painted scenes were used in the University of Oxford, and consequently that the word *scene* had existence, may be proved by the following stage direction annexed to the Prologue to *TECHNOGAMIA*, &c., by Barton Holiday, 1618: "Here the upper part of the scene opened; when straight appeared an heauen, etc.—they descended in order within the scene whiles the musick played."† Where no scenery was available, it was usual to write the names of the different places where the scenes were laid in the 'progress of the play, which were so arranged, as to be visible to the audience.

Downes is so frequently inaccurate, that it is by no means a matter for wonderment to find him making the erroneous statement that the scenes used by Davenant at the opening of his house with the *Siege of Rhodes* and *The Wits*, were the first that ever were introduced in England. Malone is of opinion that he must have meant the first ever exhibited in a *regular drama in a public theatre*.

However, we must take care not to be misled by the term *scene* in some of the early accounts, for clearly enough that did not mean painted and moveable views as now understood thereby, but short stage representations or presentments; that such scenery as we now have (making due allowance of course for modern improvements) was unknown to the early theatre, is pretty well settled by the majority of those who have written upon the subject. Fleckno in his "Short Discourse," 1664, says, "now for the difference betwixt our theatres and those of former times,

\* Leland Coll., vol 2.

† Stevens.



they were but plain and simple, with no other scenes nor decorations of the stage, but only old tapestry, and the stage strewed with rushes; with their habits accordingly."

A little further on, Fleckno says, "For scenes and machines, they are no new invention; our masques and some of our plays in former times (though not so ordinary) having had as good or rather better than we have now." Malone remarks this apparent contradiction to what he had previously written, and says:—"To reconcile this passage with the foregoing, the author must be supposed to speak here, not of the exhibitions at the public theatres, but of masques and private plays, performed either at court or at noblemen's houses. He does not say 'some of our *theatres*, but our masques and some of our *plays*, having had,' &c. We have already seen that Love's Mistakes, or the Queen's Masque, was exhibited with scenes at Denmark house in 1636. In the reign of King Charles the First, the performance of plays at court, and at private houses, seems to have been very common, and gentlemen went to great expence in these exhibitions."

To the authority of Fleckno may be added that of Edward Phillips, who in his "Theatrum Poetarum," 1674, [article Davenant], praises the poet for "the great fluency of his wit and fancy, especially for what he wrote for the English Stage, of which, having laid the foundation before by his musical dramas, when the usual plays were not suffered to be acted, he was the first reviver and improver by painted scenes." (p. 191).

Wright also, who was well acquainted with the history of our ancient stage, and had certainly conversed with many persons who had seen theatrical performances before the civil wars, expressly says that "scenes were first introduced



by Sir William Davenant on the *publick* stage, at the Duke's old theatre in Lincoln-Inn fields. Presently after the Restoration," this writer informs us, "the King's players acted publicly at the Red Bull for some time, and then removed to a newly built playhouse in Vere-street by Clare-market. There they continued for a year or two, and then removed to the theatre-royal in Drury-lane, where they *first* made use of SCENES *which had been a little before introduced* UPON THE PUBLICK STAGE *by Sir William Davenant, at the Duke's Old Theatre, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields*, but afterwards very much improved, with the addition of curious machines by Mr. Betterton, at the new theatre in Dorset Gardens, to the great expense and continual charge of the players." Wright calls it the Duke's old theatre in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, though in fact in 1663 it was a new building, because when he wrote, it had become old, and a new theatre had been built in Lincoln's Inn fields in 1695. He is here speaking of *plays* and *players*, and therefore makes no account of the musical entertainments exhibited by Davenant a few years before at Rutland House, and at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, in which a little attempt at scenery had been made. In those pieces, I believe, no stage player performed.\*

In these days of elaborate and gorgeous spectacular entertainments, when the mounting of a play is a matter of so much anxious consideration, and when such vast sums are expended thereupon to gratify the public thirst for beautiful scenery, and secure a flattering panegyric from the critics, it sounds strange to hear that in the opinion of some, the scenery "while a great addition of beauty to dramatic en-

\* Malone's Hist. of English Stage.

tertainments, proved the ruin of fine acting." Richard Fleckno says (in the treatise already quoted), "that which makes our Stage the better, makes our Playes the worse perhaps, they striving now to make them more for sight than hearing; whence that solid joy of the interior is lost, and that benefit which men formerly received from Playes, from which they seldom or never went away, but far better and wiser than when they came."

The *Biographia Britannica* attempts to account for this chiefly in two ways—first, on the part of the public who enjoyed low prices of admission, while the adornments were of the most limited description—"when there was nothing more than a curtain of some very coarse stuff, upon the drawing up of which the stage appeared either with bare walls, or the sides coarsely matted, or covered with tapestry, so that the place originally represented, and all the changes successively in which the Poets of those times indulged themselves very freely, there was nothing to help the reader's understanding, or to assist the actor's performance but bare imagination, and secondly, on the part of the owners of playhouses, who, notwithstanding the advanced prices found their profits continually sinking. The author of the *Historia Histrionica* says that the whole sharers in Mr. Hart's Company divided a thousand pounds a year apiece, before the new and expensive decorations came into fashion."

Sir William Davenant, however, we are told, "considered things in another light; he was well acquainted with the alterations which the French theatre had received under the auspices of Cardinal Richlieu, who had an excellent taste; and he remembered the elegant contrivances of Inigo Jones, which were not at all inferior to the designs of the best French masters; Sir William was likewise sensible, that the monarch

he served was an exquisite judge of everything of this kind ; and all these considerations taken together, excited in him a passion for the advancement of the theatre, to which without dispute the great figure it has since made is chiefly owing.”\*

There is no doubt that Sir William’s arrangements were, many of them, made in view of that knowledge of the French stage which he had derived from the account given by Betterton, who by command of the King paid a visit to Paris to observe how things were there managed that he might judge of what would tend to the improvement of the stage in England.

In allusion to this matter, Gildon says, “ others have laid it to the charge of Mr. Betterton as the first Innovator on our rude Stage as a Crime ; nay as the Destruction of good Playing ; but I think with very little Show of Reason, and very little knowledge of the Stages of Athens and Rome, where I am apt to believe, was in their flourishing times as great Actors as ever played here before Curtains. For how that which helps the Representation, by assisting the pleasing delusion of the mind in regard of the place, should spoil the acting, I cannot imagine.

“ The Athenian Stage was so much adorned, that the very ornaments or decorations cost the State more money than their wars against the Persians ; and the Romans, though their Dramatic Poets were much inferior to the Greeks (if we may guess at those who are perished, by those who remain), were yet not behind them in the magnificence of the Theatre to heighten the pleasure of the representation. If this was Mr. Betterton’s thought, it was very just ; since the audience must be often puzzled to find the place and

\* *Biographia Dramatica.*

situation of the scene, which gives light to the play, and helps to deceive us agreeably, while they saw nothing before them but some linsy woolsy curtains, or at best some piece of old tapestry filled with awkward figures that would almost fright the audience.

“This, therefore, I must urge as his praise, that he endeavoured to complete that representation, which before was imperfect.”

The second change in theatrical management to which we alluded as taking place at this period, was the employment of women to take *women's parts*, these having previously been performed by men.

Downes says of Hart :—“An apprentice to Robinson, an actor who lived before the civil wars ; he afterwards had a Captain's commission, and fought for Charles the First. He acted *Women's parts* when a boy.”

Of Burt :—“Boy or apprentice to Shanke, and acted in his youth women's parts ; this seems to have been the practice of the old Actors to initiate their apprentices in women's characters.”

Of Mr. Kynaston :—“He acted Arthiope in the *Unfortunate Lovers* ; the Princess in the *Mad Lover* ; Aglaura ; Ismenia, in the *Maid of the Mill* ; and several other women's parts ; he being then very young, made a compleat female stage beauty ; performing his parts so well, especially Arthiorpe and Aglaura, being parts greatly moving compassion and pity ; that it has since been disputable among the judicious, whether any woman that succeeded him so sensibly touched the audience as he.”

It is well known, of course, to scholars, that in the earliest times on the Greek stage, women's parts were undertaken

by men. Plutarch mentions in his 'Life of Phocion,' that 318 years before the Christian era, a tragedy was stopped for some time, by one of the actors who was to personate a queen, refusing to come on the stage without a proper mask and dress, and a number of gaily dressed attendants. The Antigone of Sophocles is also mentioned by Demosthenes in one of his Orations as being represented by Theodorus and Aristodemus.

It was similar on the Roman stage as it was on the Greek, as shewn by the letters of Cicero to Atticus, and by passages in Horace, women only appearing in the interludes between the acts, some notable instances being recorded by Pliny the elder, of two of them who had done this for an unusual number of years, viz., Luceia, whose career was said to have extended 100 years, and Galeria Copiola who had acted for 90 years.

This old custom held its ground in England from the earliest dawn of the drama down to the year 1659 (or 1660), when women, as we have said, were introduced for *women's parts*. The change, however, was not favourably regarded by all parties, and in some instances it was thought proper to apologize when making it. It was considered by many highly indecorous that females should make their appearance on the public stage, though when once introduced, the practice soon grew into favour, and became an essential feature of the performance. Macaulay is of opinion that the public morals were thereby seriously deteriorated, and that through it the stage degenerated rapidly until it became the home of everything that was impure. "The fascination of sex," he says, "was called in to aid the fascination of art; and the young spectator saw, with emotions unknown to the contemporaries of Shakspeare and Jonson, tender and

sprightly heroines personated by lovely women. From the day on which the theatres were re-opened, they became seminaries of vice; and the evil propagated itself. The profligacy of the representation soon drove away sober people. The frivolous and dissolute who remained required every year stronger and stronger stimulants. Thus the artists corrupted the spectators, and the spectators the artists, till the turpitude of the drama became such as must astonish all who are not aware that extreme relaxation is the natural effect of extreme restraint and that an age of hypocrisy is in the regular course of things, followed by an age of impudence.”\*

It is amusing to notice how men differed two or three centuries ago about this matter. Thomas Nash in his book, ‘Pierce Penniless, his Supplication of the Devil’ (1592), prided himself on the fact that the English players were “not as the players beyond sea, having common curtizans to play women’s parts”; but Prynne took quite an opposite view of the assumption of women’s parts by men, and quoted numerous authorities to shew that “those playes wherein any men act women’s parts in woman’s apparell must needs be sinful, yea abominable unto Christians.”† He endeavoured to substantiate this by the quotation of Deut. 22, v. 5, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment.” He proved himself however just as averse to the employment of women upon the stage as Nash was, notwithstanding his tirade against the assumption by one sex of the clothing proper to the other, for shortly after, he wrote that “some

\* Hist. of England.

† Histriomatix.



Frenchwomen, or *monsters* rather, in Michaelmas term, 1629, attempted to act a French play at the playhouse in Blackfriars—an impudent, shameful, unwomanish, graceless, if not more than w——h attempt.”

The exact date of the first appearance of women upon the stage is unknown, though it is upon record that as far back as 1656, Mrs. Coleman performed Iauthe in the first part of Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*, and even earlier than this, just about the time Pryune mentions, the Office book of Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, is said to show the existence of a French Theatre in London where “without doubt women acted.”

Malone and Stevens say that “the first woman that appeared in a regular drama on a public stage, performed the part of Desdemona,” but who the lady was, they declare they are unable to say.

Pepys writes, Jan. 3rd, 1661, “To the theatre, when was acted ‘*Beggar's Bush*,’ it being very well done; and here the first time that ever I saw women come upon the stage.”

Malone says, “The play of *Othello* is enumerated by Downes as one of the stock plays of the King's Company on their opening their theatre in Drury Lane, in April, 1663, and it appears from a paper found with Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book, and endorsed by him, that it was one of the stock plays of the same company from the time they began to play without a patent at the Red Bull in St. John Street. Mrs. Hughes performed the part of Desdemona in 1663, when the company removed to Drury Lane, but whether she performed with them while they played at the Red Bull, or in Vere Street, near Clare Market, has not been ascertained. Perhaps Mrs. Saunderson made her first essay there, though she afterwards was enlisted in Davenant's



Company, the received tradition is that she was the first English Actress."

This Mrs. Saunderson was the lady whom Betterton subsequently married, and it may not be out of place here to explain that the appellation mistress was the title given to unmarried ladies before the Revolution; Miss was understood in olden times to mean a woman of pleasure; many mistakes have been made about this and much confusion caused.

It may probably be taken for granted, at any rate, that this lady was the first actress in Davenant's Company, playing Ianthe in the Siege of Rhodes on the opening of the new theatre in Lincoln's-Inn Fields in April, 1662.

## CHAPTER IV.

Betterton as Don Henrique in the Adventures of Five Hours—His Marriage—Twelfth Night—The Slighted Maid, Betterton as Iberio—The Stepmother—Hamlet revived, renewed admiration of Pepys—Harris's defection—Henry the Eighth—Bondman revived—Henry the Fifth, Betterton as Owen Tudor—Anne of Burgundy—Betterton as Macbeth—Comical Revenge—The Rivals—Duchess of Malfy revived—Mustapha—The great Plague and Fire of London—Close of the theatres and suspension of all amusements—Reopening of the theatres—Performance of Cambyses—The English Princess—Betterton's sickness—Sir Solomon Single—Betterton's three plays : Woman made a Justice, The Amorous Widow, The Unjust Judge—Performance of Juliana.

**R**ETURNING now more particularly to Betterton's performances and what the critics thought of him. The record recommences with January the 8th, 1663, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, when we have performed for the first time, "The Adventures of Five Hours," with the following cast :—

Don Henrique...	.....Betterton.
Don Antonio .....	Harris.
Don Octavio .....	Young.
Diego .....	Sandford.
Ernesto .....	Smith.
Silvio.....	Price.

The Corrigidor .....	Smith.
Camilla .....	Mrs. Davenport.
Porcia.....	Mrs. Betterton.
Flora .....	Mrs. Long.

The question of the date of Betterton's marriage seems to start up just here, for Genest says, in his selection from her characters, 1661—2, as Mrs. Saunderson, 1663, as Mrs. Betterton. The *Biographia Britannica* states that this marriage took place in 1670, but this is clearly wrong, and the mistake has been copied and perpetuated by others. It is indeed a question whether the marriage did not take place earlier than 1663.

On twelfth night was played *Twelfth Night*, with great success ; Betterton as Sir Toby Belch.

Feb. 23rd, 1663, erroneously marked May 28th, by Genest, was played "*The Slighted Maid*." Pepys on that day says, "While my wife dressed herself, Creed and I walked out to see what play was acted to-day, and we find it '*The Slighted Mayde*' (a comedy by Sir Robert Stapylton). To the Duke's house, where we saw it well acted, though the play hath little good in it."

The cast was :—

Iberio.....	Betterton.
Salerno ... ..	Harris.
Peralta .....	Underhill.
Arviedo.....	Cademan.
Filomarini...	Medburn.
Lugo.....	Smith.
Corbuto.....	Young.

Vindex ..... Sandford.  
 Gioseppe ... Noke the elder.  
 Decio.....Mrs. Gibbs.  
 Pyramena....Mrs. Betterton.  
 Diacelia.....Mrs. Long.  
 Leandra.....Mrs. Williams.  
 Menanthe....Noke the younger.  
 Joan.....Mrs. Turner.

Considerable difference of opinion has existed as to the merits of this comedy, some regarding it as a very good one with a complicated, but regularly conducted, plot, while Dryden says, "There is no scene in the first act, which might not by as good reason be in the fifth."\*

The Stepmother, by Sir Robert Stapleton was licensed this year (1663) and played at some time therein, but the date seems to be lost. It was a play of but little value, some of its scenes being pronounced decidedly bad. . Filamoor was played by Betterton, and Cæsarina by Mrs. Betterton.

May 28th, 1663, Pepys writes, "To the Duke's house, and there saw Hamlet done, giving us fresh reason never to think enough of Betterton."

The name of Harris has occurred several times in the casts we have given, in connection with that of Betterton; in Pepys, for July 22nd, 1663, we read, "Wotton tells me the reason of Harris's going from Sir William Davenant's

\* Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

house is, that he grew very proud, and demanded 20*l.* for himself extraordinary, more than Betterton or any body else, upon every new play, and 10*l.* upon every revive ; which, with other things, Sir W. Davenant would not give him, and so he swore he would never act there more, in expectation of being received in the other house ; but the King would not suffer it, upon Sir W. Davenant's desire that he would not, for then he might shut up house, and that is true. He tells me that his going is at present a great loss to the House, and that he fears he hath a stipend from the other House privately. He tells me that the fellow grew very proud of late, the King and every body else, crying him up so high, and that above Betterton, he being a more ayery man, as he is indeed. But yet Betterton he says, they all say, do act some parts that none but himself can do."

Jan. 1st, 1664. Pepys writes, "Went to the Duke's house, the first play I have been at these six months according to my last vowe, and here saw the so much cried-up play of 'Henry the Eighth,' which, though I went with resolution to like it, is so simple a thing, made up of a great many patches, that, besides the shows and processions in it, there is nothing in the world good or well done." From this we may conclude that the play was revived in 1663, probably near the end of the year.

Downes gives a somewhat more favourable account of it, for he says it continued acting fifteen days together, with general applause. He tells us "The part of the King was so right and justly done by Mr. Betterton, he being instructed in it by Sir William, who had it from old Mr. Lowen that had his instructions from Mr. Shakespear him-

self, that he dared and would aver none could or ever would come near him in that age, in the performance of that Part." Queen Katharine was played by Mrs. Betterton. We are told that Mr. Harris's performance of Cardinal Wolsey was little inferior to Betterton's performance, "He doing it," says Downes, "with such just state, port and mien, that I dare affirm none hitherto have equalled him." All the players were newly clothed in proper habits. The King's was new, and all the Lords, the Cardinals, the Bishops, the Doctors, Proctors, Lawyers, and Tipstaves.

July 28th, 1664, Pepys says, "Home and then abroad, and seeing the Bondman upon the posts, I went to the Duke's House and saw it acted. It is true for want of practice, they have many of them forgot their parts a little ; but Betterton and my poor Ianthe, outdo all the world."

August 13th, 1664, Pepys writes, "To a new play at the Duke's House, of 'Henry the Fifth,' a most noble play, writ by my Lord Orrery : wherein Betterton, Harris, and Ianthe's parts, are most incomparably wrote and done, and the whole play the most full of height and raptures of wit and sense that I ever heard."

The cast was (according to the print of 1668) :—

King Henry.....	Harris.
Owen Tudor.....	Betterton.
Duke of Burgundy.....	Smith.
Duke of Bedford.....	Underhill.
Count of Blamont.....	Medbourne.
Dauphin.....	Young.
Constable of France.....	James Noke.

Queen of France.....Mrs. Long.  
 Princes Catharine.....Mrs. Betterton.  
 Anne of Burgundy .....Mrs. Davis (*Genest*).

Downes fixes the date of this play several years later, erroneously so, according to *Genest*, who says it was then only revived. Downes's cast varies somewhat from the above, he says the Duke of Bedford was played by Mr. Lilliston and the Queen by Mrs. Betterton.

Nov. 5th, 1664,—Betterton played *Macbeth*,—"A pretty good play," says Pepys, "but admirably acted."

Somewhere about this time was acted "*Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub.*" The company cleared in the month a thousand pounds by this play, Betterton performing Lord Beaufort; and Mrs. Betterton, *Graciana*. The author was *Etheridge*, and the play was licensed for printing, July 8th, 1664. Pepys says it was played Jan. 4th, 1665.

Also was acted at this time "*The Rivals*," by Sir William Davenant, says Downes, but Davies says, in a note in the "*Roscius*," "I know not on what authority this Play of *The Rivals* is ascribed to Davenant; it is not in the folio collection of his works, nor does the 4to edition of it, 1668, bear his name. It is a very indifferent alteration of Shakspeare and Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and contains several Songs, &c., not in the original; particularly a hunting-dialogue sung by Forresters, Hunters and Huntresses: the ideas and hunting terms in which are entirely borrowed from Ben Jonson's Pastoral of the Sad Shepherd." Downes, however, seems to regard it more favourably, at least in



some parts. He says it had a very fine interlude in it, of vocal and instrumental music, mixed with very diverting dances; and that Mr. Price, introducing the dancing by a short comic prologue, gained him an universal applause of the town. The part of Theocles was done by Mr. Harris; Philander, by Mr. Betterton; Cunopes, the Jailor, by Mr. Underhill; and all the Women's parts admirably acted; chiefly Celia, a Shepherdess, being mad for love; especially in singing several wild and mad songs; My Lodging is on the Cold Ground, &c. He does not give the name of the lady who sang this latter song, and so charmed the King that he made her at once one of his favourites, and roused the vindictive jealousy of Nell Gwyn, who by a trick managed to secure her departure from the royal presence, though with a pension of a thousand pounds per annum; she was the beautiful Miss Davies, and the name of the character she played was not Celia, as Downes gives it, but Celania. The play was admirably performed, and had a run of nine days, with a full audience.

One date, at least, of the performance of this play is fixed by Pepys. On Dec. 2nd, 1664, he writes,—“After dinner with my wife and Mercer to the Duke's House, and there saw ‘The Rivalls,’ which I had seen before, but the play not good, nor anything but the good actings of Betterton and his wife and Harris.”

Webster's “Dutchess of Malfy” was also revived at this period, with the following cast:—

Duke Ferdinand.....	Harris.
Bosola.....	Betterton.
Antonia....	Smith.
Cardinal . . . . .	Young.

Dutchess of Malfy.....Mrs. Betterton.

Julia.....Mrs. Gibbs.

Downes says, "This Play was so exceedingly excellently acted in all parts ; chiefly Duke Ferdinand and Bosola ; it filled the House 8 days successively, it proving one of the best Stock Tragedies."

April 3rd, 1665, Pepys says, "To a play at the Duke's, of my Lord Orrery's, called Mustapha, which being not good, made Betterton's part and Ianthe's but ordinary too. All the pleasure of the Play was, the King and my Lady Castlemaine were there ; and pretty witty Nell Gwynn, at the King's House, and the younger Marshall sat next us ; which pleased me mightily."

The cast on this occasion was:—

Solyman the Magnificent.....Betterton.

Mustapha, his son ..... Harris.

Zanger, do. .... Smith.

Cardinal..... Young.

Roxalana..... Mrs. Betterton.

Previously by Mrs. Davenant and

afterwards by Mrs. Wiseman.

Queen of Hearts.....Mrs. Davis.

A good play, well mounted and well performed.

For some time after this all is a blank in dramatic history ; this was the terrible plague year and men were in no humour for theatrical or any other recreation, even had it been safe to assemble for such a purpose. Pepys writes on April 30th :—"Great fears of the sickness here in the

City, it being said that two or three houses are already shut up." This is one of the earliest indications of what was in store for the unhappy metropolis, and it was not long before the full horrors of the situation burst upon the inhabitants. Week after week saw the bills of mortality rising with fearful rapidity, from two or three the deaths from the foul pestilence rose to scores, from scores to hundreds, and from hundreds to thousands. All who could leave the city did so, but there were numbers who had not the facilities or the means for flying from the plague-stricken place, and these had to remain and face the terrors and dangers surrounding them. Instead of the notice announcing the presentation of some amusement or other, appeared the warnings of physicians and the proclamations of the authorities ; instead of the open door, through which went in and out merry and active passengers, was the closed portal with its red cross and touching inscription, "Lord have mercy upon us," and at night, instead of the coach and waggon conveying the pleasure-seekers to the houses of entertainment, was the rumbling cart with its torchmen, on its way to the great pits where hundreds found a common grave, and the doleful cry, "Bring out your dead !" The theatre was closed, and all other entertainments at which men were likely to assemble in numbers, and so propagate disease, including fairs, were forbidden.

The sickness, in due course, reached its height, and then gradually subsided. Before, however, the city had time to resume its usual appearance, indeed, before all danger from the plague was removed, came the further disaster of the terrible fire which raged with a fury that threatened to sweep away a greater part, if not the whole, of the town. Not until Plague and Fire had been exterminated was any

attempt made to recommence theatrical performances, when, Downes writes, "After a year and a half's discontinuance they (the Company) by Command began with the same play again at Court (Mustapha) the Christmas after the Fire in 1666; and from thence continued to act at their theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields." Pepys, however, while contradicting this, also contradicts himself, for he says on Dec. 7th, 1666, "To the King's Playhouse, where two acts were almost done when I came in; and there I sat with my eloak about my face and saw the remainder of 'The Mayd's Tragedy,' a good play and well acted, especially by the younger Marshall, who is become a pretty good actor, and is the *first play I have seen in either of the two houses, since before the great plague*, they having acted now about fourteen days publickly. But I was in mighty pain, lest I should be seen by anybody to be at a play." Two months before this, viz., on October 29th, he had written, "To Whitehall, and into the new playhouse there, the first time I ever was there, and the *first play I have seen since before the great plague*. By and by, the King and Queen, Duke and Duchess, and all the great ladies of the Court; which indeed was a fine sight. But the play being 'Love in a Tub,' a silly play, and though done by the Duke's people, yet having neither Betterton nor his wife, and the whole thing done ill, and being ill also, I had no manner of pleasure in the play: Besides, the House, though very fine, yet bad for the voice for hearing. The sight of the ladies indeed, was exceedingly noble; and above all, my lady Castlemaine. The play done by ten o'clock."

We are told that the first play after the theatre was fairly reopened was Cambyzes, a tragedy, by Mr. Settle; Betterton playing Cambyzes; Harris, Prexaspes the General; Young,

Prince Smerdis ; and Mrs. Betterton, Mandana. Also that the play was "well acted and succeeded for six days with a full audience."

Several entries occur in Pepys' diary of visits to the Duke's house, and of the performance of certain plays, in the early part of 1667, but no mention is made of Betterton, though probably, he acted in most of them.

Genest gives March 7th as the date of the performance of the "English Princess ; or, the Death of Richard the 3rd," a tragedy, by Caryl. Excellently acted, says Downes, in every part, chiefly King Richard, by Mr. Betterton ; Duke of Richmond, by Mr. Harris ; Sir William Stanley, by Mr. Smith.

Davies has a note in the Roscius to the effect that "Betterton's action must have been very excellent to support so wretched a piece, of which the author has not borrowed a line from Shakespeare."

Pepys was present at this performance and his opinion of it was, in some respects, similar to that of Davies. He says, "To the Duke's Playhouse, and saw 'The English Princess, or Richard the Third,' a most sad, melancholy play, and pretty good ; but nothing eminent in it, as some tragedies are ; only little Miss Davies did dance a jig after the end of the play, and these telling the next day's play ; so that it come in by force only to please the company to see her dance in boys' clothes."

October 16th, 1667, Pepys writes :—"To the Duke of York's house ; and I was vexed to see Young, who is but a bad actor at best, act Macbeth in the room of Betterton, who, poor man ! is sick : but Lord ! what a prejudice it

wrought in me against the whole play, and everybody else agreed in disliking this fellow."

March 3rd, 1669, was acted Carrol's "Sir Solomon Single; or, the Cautious Coxcomb."

Sir Solomon.....	Betterton.
Sir Arthur Addel .....	Nokes.
Peregrine Woodland .....	Harris.
Young Single .....	Smith.
Wary .....	Sandford.
Timothy .....	Underhill.
Mrs. Betty .....	Mrs. Johnson.
Mrs. Julia .....	Mrs. Betterton.

The versatility of Betterton's genius is said to have been conspicuously shewn in his rendering of this part, which was altogether unsuited to his usual style of acting. The play was said to have been singularly well acted and to have run twelve days together.

We now come across three plays described by Downes as written by Betterton and acted about this time.

1.—"Woman made a Justiee." Mrs. Long acting "the Justiee so charmingly, and the Comedy being perfect and justly acted, so well pleased the audience, it continued acting 14 days together: the prologue being spoke to it each day."

2,—"The Amorous Widow ; or, Wanton Wife."

Lovermore.....	Betterton.
Cunningham .....	Smith.
Barnaby Brittle .....	Nokes.
The Widow .....	Mrs. Betterton.
Mrs. Brittle .....	Mrs. Long.



## 3.—“The Unjust Judge ; or, Appius and Virginia.”

Virginius.....Betterton.

Appius .....Harris.

Virginia..... Mrs. Betterton.

“All the parts,” says Downes, “exactly performed. It lasted successively 8 days, and very frequently acted afterwards.”

“The precise year, in which each of Betterton’s three plays came out, cannot be ascertained—the point however is nothing material, as at this part of the history of the stage, it would be difficult, or rather impossible, to state the time at which every play came out with any degree of exactness—Downes has certainly not arranged the plays in chronological order—he rarely states the exact time of their representation ; and he is sometimes so vague in his expressions, that no stress can be laid on what he says—yet, as he is probably right in most cases, he has been followed, when no reason has appeared to the contrary—in many instances there is nothing to guide one, but the date of publication ; and all that one learns from that date with *certainty*, is, that the play had, wholly or in part, lost its attraction on the stage, and was therefore committed to the press—the time that intervened between the representation and publication varied according to circumstances.”\*

Licensed Sept. 8th, 1671, and played near the end of the Company’s performances at that theatre.

\* Genest,



“Juliana ; or, the Princess of Poland,” by Crowne.

Ladislaus... .. Betterton.

Demetrius ... .. Young,

Cardinal..... Harris.

Sharnofsky ... .. Smith.

Cassonofsky..... Sandford.

Landlord..... Angel.

Juliana ... .. Mrs. Betterton.

Paulina ... .. Mrs. Long.

Considered a very poor play, with plot confused, and language frequently bad.

## CHAPTER V.

A new theatre projected and built ; opposition to it ; its character—Opening performance, Sir Martin Mar-all—Comical Revenge—King Charles the 8th of France—Mr. Anthony—Epsom Wells—Mackbeth—The Forced Marriage—The Morning Ramble—Empress of Morocco—Hamlet revived—Betterton's excellence in this character the Tatler on, and Rowe—Alcibiades—Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa—Man of the Mode—Don Carlos—Madam Fickle—Pastor Fido—The Libertine—Titus and Berenice—Antony and Cleopatra—Circe—The Rover—Siege of Babylon—Abdelazer—Destruction of Troy—Sir Patient Fancy—Friendship in Fashion—Squire Oldsapp—Counterfeits—Timon of Athens—Ædipus—Troilus and Cressida—Feigned Courtesans—Cæsar Borgia—The Orphans—Loyal General—Caius Marius—Theodosius—Loving Enemies—Henry VI., part 1—King Lear—Lucius Junius Brutus—Soldier's Fortune—Spanish Fryar—City Heiress—Princess of Cleve—Venice Preserved—Virtue Betrayed—Quarrels amongst the Players—Artifice of the Duke's Company—Agreement with Hart and Kynaston, the Deed—Gildon's Defence of the Scheme—Performance of the Duke of Guise—Rule a Wife—Plain Dealer—King and no King—Valentinian—Julius Cæsar revived—Lucky Chance—Injured Lovers—Bury Fair—Massacre of Paris—Don Sebastian—Prophetess—Amphitryon.

THE theatre in Lincoln's-Inn where the subject of our memoir has hitherto been performing, proving by this time to be too small and inconvenient both for actors and audience, a new one was projected by Sir William Davenant in Dorset

Gardens, Salisbury Court, Fleet Street. He was able to do this under his patent of 1662, which granted power to build in the cities of London and Westminster, or the suburbs thereof. The design is attributed to Sir Christopher Wren, whose attention might have been directed by Davenant, in his life-time, to the giving effect to the new scenery ; and therefore this elegant structure was as richly adorned without as within. The front had a southern aspect, with a portico, and two smaller arches for the convenience of earriages. The building and scenery cost £5000. Among other fanciful ornaments, there were busts of our principal dramatic writers, which time, or the gods, and perhaps both, mutilated. Dufey in Collin's Walk through London, 1690, says, " Collin,

" ——— saw each box with beauty crown'd,  
And pictures deck the structure round ;  
Ben, Shakespear, and the learned rout,  
With noses some, and some without."

Dryden alludes to this exhibition of the poets in the following couplet of an Epilogue, spoken on opening the new house in Drury Lane, 1674 :—

" Though in their house the Poet's heads appear,  
We hope we may presume their wits are here."

Though this theatre was probably erected upon nearly the same spot where dramatic exhibitions had, with only occasional intermissions, existed for nearly a century, the project was not carried into effect without considerable opposition from the citizens. Baxter says :— " A new playhouse

being built in Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, called the Duke of York's, the Lord Mayor, it is said, desired of the King that it might not be, the youth of the city being already so corrupted by sensual pleasures ; but he obtained not his end,' and the theatre was opened in 1671, by Davenant's widow and sons, into whose hands the patent had fallen.

The new theatre is said to have been built by subscription and at an unusual expense, and that the subscribers were called Adventurers, who Genest remarks are said to have been in a greater fright about the success of the theatre than ever poet was about the success of his play.

Lady Davenant, Sir William's widow, was really at the head of affairs at the theatre, but her son Charles acted for her, and Betterton and Harris took a leading part in the management of the Company.

The new building was opened November 9th, with Sir Martin Mar-all, a comedy by J. Dryden, which proved highly successful, although it had been acted 30 times at least at Lincoln's-Inn, and several times at Court.

Then came "The Comical Revenge, or, Love in a Tub," performed two days to full audiences.

The first *new* play brought out at the new theatre was "King Charles VIII. of France," a rhyming play of an historical character, by J. Crowne. "It was all new cloathed," says Downes, "yet lasted but six days together, but was acted now and then afterwards."

Charles the King ..... Betterton.

Ferdinand ..... Harris.

Prince of Salerne ..... Smith.

Alphonso .....	Medburne.
Trivultio .....	Sandford.
Ascanio.....	Young.
Ghost.....	Cademan.
Isabella .....	Mrs. Betterton.
Julia .....	Mrs. Dixon.
Cornelia.....	Mrs. Slaughter.
Irene .....	Mrs. Shadwell.

At some time or other near this Betterton played Art, and Mrs. Betterton, Mrs. Isabella in Anthony, but it is difficult to fix the date. Genest says we may be nearly certain that it was in the season of 1671—72.

In 1672, at Dorset Gardens was acted, Shadwell's excellent play, "Epson Wells," a piece having so much true wit in it, that it was greatly admired by foreigners as well as Englishmen. Betterton played Bevil, and Mrs. Betterton, Mrs. Jilt. Downes says Mrs. Johnson, who acted Carolina, "danced a jig so charming well, Love's power, in a little time after, coerc'd her to dance more charming elsewhere."

Then came Macbeth with both Betterton and his wife as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Afterwards "The forced Marriage, or Jealous Bridegroom," a play of but little account by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as Alcippus, and Mrs. Betterton as Erminia.

In 1673 was acted "The Morning Ramble, or Town Humours," by Nevil Payne according to Downes, but described as anonymous by Baker, and said generally to be a tolerably

good comedy. The character of Townlove played by Betterton.

The Empress of Morocco was played soon after this with the following Cast :—

Criminalhaz .....	Betterton.
Muley Hamet.....	Smith.
Muley Labas .....	Harris.
Hametalhaz .....	Medbourne.
Laula (Empress) ... ..	Mrs. Betterton.
Mariamne .....	Mrs. Mary Lee.
Morena .....	Mrs. Johnson.

This is said to have been the first play that was ever sold in England for two shillings, and the first that was ever printed with cuts. It was played with great success, and created much jealousy in the minds of the author's contemporaries.

Soon after the above we have Hamlet revived. Hamlet of course was played by Betterton, while his wife took the part of Ophelia; Medbourne acting the Ghost; Smith, Horatio, and Crosby the King.

Great as Betterton was in all the characters he played, he seems to have been greatest in that of the Prince in this play. Testimony to this effect comes from all quarters, and the highest praise is constantly lavished upon him. In the Tatler for instance we have the following :—

“I was going on in reading my letter when I was interrupted by Mr. Greenhat, who had been this evening at the play of Hamlet. Mr. Bickerstaff, said he, had you been to-

night at the play-house, you had seen the force of Action to perfection. Your admired Mr. Betterton behaved himself so well, that though now about seventy, he acted Youth, and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture and voice, appeared through the whole *Drama*, a youth of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The Soliloquy where he began the celebrated sentence of *To be, or not to be*; the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet, the noble ardor after seeing his father's ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives. Pray, Mr. Bickerstaff, let us have virtue thus represented on the stage with its proper ornaments, or let these ornaments be added to her in places more sacred."

Rowe, likewise, in his life of Shakespeare, offers a similar tribute of praise and admiration :—

"I cannot leave Hamlet without taking notice of the advantage with which we have seen this masterpiece of Shakespear distinguish itself upon the stage, by Mr. Betterton's fine performance of that part. A man, who, though he had no other good qualities, as he has a great many, must have made his way into the esteem of all men of letters, by this only excellency. No man is better acquainted with Shakespear's manner of expression; and indeed he has studied him so well, and is so much a master of him, that whatever part of his he performs, he does it as if it had been written on purpose for him, and that the author had exactly conceived it as he plays it. I must own a particular obligation to him, for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this



life, which I have here transmitted to the public : his veneration for the memory of Shakespear having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration."

During 1674, "No new character," is reported of Betterton.

In 1675 at Dorset Gardens, was played Alcibiades, a tragedy by Thomas Otway, with the following Cast :—

Alcibiades.....	Betterton.
Tissaphernes.....	Sandford.
Theramnes .....	Harris.
Agis (King of Sparta).....	Medbourne.
Patroclus .....	Crosby.
Deidamia (Queen of Sparta)	Mrs. Mary Lee.
Timandra .....	Mrs. Betterton.
Draxilla..... ..	Mrs. Barry.

The chief defects in this play arose, it is said, from Otway's ignorance of Spartan manners.

Licensed May 4th, 1676, and played almost same time, Ibrahim, the Illustrious Bassa, a tragedy of little quality, by Settle, founded according to Langbaine, on Scudery's Romance, Ibrahim. Solyman was played by Betterton, and Isabella by Mrs. Betterton.

Licensed June 3rd, 1676, 'The Man of the Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter,' a comedy by Etherege, Betterton as Dorimant, Mrs. Betterton as Bellinda.

Licensed June 15th, 1676, "Don Carlos, Prince of Spain," a tragedy by Thomas Otway. This was the second work of the Author, and met with considerable success and applause, notwithstanding it is pronounced by Genest to be an indifferent tragedy in rhyme.

Booth writing to Aaron Hill, says:—"Mr. Betterton observed to me, many years ago, that Don Carlos succeeded much better than either Venice Preserved, or The Orphan, and was infinitely more applauded and followed for many years." That it was successful, whatever its merits, is undeniable, and additional testimony is found in Lord Rochester's lampoon in his "Trial of the Poets for the Bays." He says

"Tom Otway came next, Tom Shadwell's dear Zany,  
And swears for Heroicks, he writes best of any,  
Don Carlos his pocket so amply had filled,  
That his mange was quite cur'd, and his lice were all  
killed."

The play which is full of love scenes from beginning to end, refers of course to Spanish life, but is affirmed by Langbaine to be a following of the French novel of Don Carlos.

The Cast was as follows:—

King Philip the 2nd.....	Betterton.
Don Carlos.....	Smith.
Don John of Austria.....	Harris.
Rin Gomez.....	Medburne.
Queen of Spain .....	Mrs. Mary Lee.
Duchess of Eboli .....	Mrs. Shadwell.
Henrietta.....	Mrs. Gibbs.

Licensed Nov. 20th, 1676, "Madam Fiekle, or the Witty False One," a comedy by Thomas Durfey. This Author, if, he may be so called, has always been considered one of the greatest plagiarists that ever lived, and in confirmation thereof, the play before us is said to be wholly made up from other comedies, such as the Antiquary, the Walks of Islington, the Fawn, etc. Betterton played the part of Lord Belamour.

Licensed Dec. 26th, 1676, "Pastor Fido, or the Faithful Shepherd," a translation from the Italian by Mr. Dymock. Betterton as Sylvano, a discontented Shepherd, and Mrs. Betterton as Amaryllis.

Betterton seems also to have play the part of Don John in 'The Libertine,' and by his performance, says Downes, to have crowned the play."

Licensed Feb. 19th, 1677, "Titus and Berenice," and played with Betterton as the Emperor.

Licensed April 24th, 1677, "Antony and Cleopatra," a tragedy in rhyme by Sir Charles Sedley. Betterton as Antony, and Mrs. Betterton as Octavia.

Licensed June 18th, 1677, "Ciree," by Dr. Davenant. Betterton as Orestes, Mrs. Betterton as Iphigenia.

Licensed July 2nd, 1677, "The Rover, or the Banished Cavaliers," a comedy by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as Belville, Mrs. Betterton as Florinda.

Licensed Nov. 2nd, 1677, "The Siege of Babylon," called by some a 'wretched' tragedy, by Pordage. Betterton as Orontes, Mrs. Betterton as Statira.

Played at the close of 1677, "Abdelazer, or the Moor's Revenge," by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as Abdelazer, and Mrs. Betterton as Florella.

Licensed Jan. 29th, 1678, "The Destruction of Troy," by Banker, a play not at all favourably regarded by the critics, but according to Baker, "far from being a despicable piece." Betterton as Achilles, Mrs Betterton as Andromache.

Licensed Jan. 1678, "Sir Patient Fancy," by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as Wittmore, Mrs. Betterton as Isabella.

Licensed May 31st, 1678, "Friendship in Fashion," a very good comedy by Otway. Betterton played Goodvile.

Licensed June 28th, 1678, "Squire Oldsapp, or the Night Adventurers," by Durfey. Betterton as Welford.

Licensed August 29th, 1678, "Counterfeits," a comedy ascribed by some to Leonard, which Langbaine throws doubt upon, on the ground that it is too good for his writing.

Betterton played the part of Vitelli.

Played also in 1678, "Timon [of Athens, or the Man Hater," by Shadwell. Betterton as Timon, Mrs. Betterton as Evandra.

Played early in 1679, "Ædipus," by Dryden and Lee,

called by the *Biographia Dramatica*, a very excellent tragedy, and by Genest a poor production, although he gives an unusually long account of it. Betterton as *Ædipus*, Mrs. Betterton as *Jocasta*.

Entered on the Stationer's Books, April 14th, 1679, "*Troilus and Cressida*, or *Truth found too late*," Betterton as *Troilus*.

Near this time also, "*Feigned Couterzans, or a Night's Intrigue*," considered a good comedy, by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as *Galliard*.

Early in 1680, "*Cæsar Borgia*," by Lee, a tragedy containing many excellencies, with a like number of defects, and which though highly successful at first, was before long withdrawn from the list of acting dramas. Betterton played *Cæsar Borgia*.

Also about this time, "*The Orphans, or the Unhappy Marriage*," a tragedy by Otway, founded upon a novel called *English Adventures*. Betterton as *Castalio*.

Also "*The Loyal General*," by Tate. Betterton as *Theocrin*.

Also "*The History and Fall of Caius Marius*," by Otway, who admits that half the play is taken from *Romeo and Juliet*. Betterton as *Caius Marius*.

Also "*Theodosius, or the Force of Love*;" Betterton as *Varanes*; Mrs. Betterton as *Pulcheria*.

Also "Loving Enemies," a comedy by Maidwell. Betterton as Lorenzo.

In 1681, was acted "Henry 6th, part first," made up from Shakespeare by Crowne. Betterton as the Duke of Gloucester.

Also "King Lear," as altered from Shakespeare by Tate. Betterton as Lear.

Also "Lucius Junius Brutus," by Nathaniel Lee, highly commended by Langbaine and pronounced by the Biographia Dramatica, a very fine play. Betterton as Brutus, Mrs. Betterton as Lucretia. Prohibited the third night.

Also, "The Soldier's Fortune," by Otway, acted with great success. Betterton as Captain Beaugard.

Also "The Spanish Fryar, or the Double Discovery," by Dryden, a play which Downes says was admirably acted and produced vast profit to the company. Betterton as Torrismond, Mrs. Betterton as Elvira.

Also "The City Heiress, or Sir Timothy Treat-all," a good comedy by Mrs. Behn. Betterton as Tom Wilding.

Also "The Princess of Clive," by Nat. Lee, abominably indelicate in some of its parts. Betterton as Duke Nemours, Mrs Betterton as Elianor.

April 21st, 1682, "Venice Preserved," by Otway, founded

on the history of the Spanish Conspiracy against the Republic of Venice, in 1618, Betterton as Jaffier.

Also "Virtue Betrayed, or Anna Bullen," by Banks, Betterton as Piercy.

Just at this time it became more evident than ever that the stage experienced a great loss of strength from the existence of the two companies, or at any rate one theatre attained to a prosperity very much superior to that of the other, "notwithstanding all the industry of the Patentee and Managers" (of the Duke's), says Gildon, "it seems the King's House then carried the vogue of the town, and the Lincoln's-Inn-Fields House being not so commodious, the Players and other Adventurers built a much more magnificent theatre in Dorset Gardens; and fitted it for all the machines and decorations the skill of those times could afford. This likewise proving less effectual than they hoped, other arts were employed, and the political maxim of divide and govern being put in practice, the feuds and animosities of the King's company were so well improved, as to produce an union betwixt the two Patents. To bring this design about, the following Agreement was signed by the Parties hereafter mentioned.

Memorandum, October 14, 1681.

"It was then agreed upon between Dr. Charles Davenant, Thomas Betterton, Gent., and William Smith, Gent., of the one Part, and Charles Hart, Gent., and Edward Kynaston, Gent. on the other Part—That the said Charles Davenant, Thomas Betterton, and William Smith, do pay or cause to be paid, out of the profits of acting, unto Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston, five shillings a piece for every day there



shall be any Tragedies, or Comedies, or other Representations acted at the Duke's theatre in Salisbury Court, or whenever the Company shall act during the respective lives of the said Charles Hart and Edward Kynaston, excepting the days the young men or young women play for their own profit only ; but this Agreement to cease if the said Charles Hart or Edward Kynaston shall at any time play among, or effectually assist the King's company of actors ; and for as long as this is paid, they both covenant and promise not to play at the King's theatre.

“ If Mr. Kynaston shall hereafter be free to act at the Duke's theatre, this agreement with him, as to his pension, shall also cease.

“ In consideration of this pension, Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do promise to make over within a month after the sealing of this, unto Charles Davenant, Thomas Betterton, and William Smith, all the right, title and elaim, which they or either of them may have to any plays, books, cloaths and scenes in the King's Playhouse.

“ Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do both also promise, within a month after the sealing hereof to make over to the said Charles Davenant, Thomas Betterton, and William Smith, all the title which they each of them have to six and three pence a piece for every day there shall be any playing at the King's theatre.

“ Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston do both also promise to promote with all their power and interest an agreement between both Play-houses, and Mr. Kynaston for himself promises to endeavour as much as he can to get free, that he may act at the Duke's Play house, but he is not obliged to play unless he have ten shillings per day allowed for his acting, and his pension then to cease.

“Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston promise to go to Law with Mr. Killigrew to have these articles performed, and are to be at the expense of the suit.

“In witness of this agreement, all the Parties have hereunto set their Hands, this 14th of October, 1681.”

The *Biographia Britannica* says the above was so singular a transaction and of an incredible nature, if the original article containing this secret treaty were not actually in being. And Gildon says, “I am sensible that this private agreement has been reflected on as tricking and unfair, but then it is by those who have not sufficiently considered the matter. All stratagems are allowed between enemies; the two houses were at war, and conduct and action were to decide the victory; and whatever the Duke’s company might fall short of in action, it is plain they won the field by their conduct. For Mr. Hart and Mr. Kynaston performed their promises so well that the union was effected in 1682, and so continued till the year 1695, when the actors under the united patents, thinking themselves aggrieved with Mr. Betterton at the head of them, got a new license to set up a Play-house once more in Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields.”

Cibber says the union did not take place till 1684, and Dr. Burney follows suit, but this evidently wrong, and but one of many known instances of inaccuracy on Cibber’s part as to dates.

The united companies, for by the action of the Duke’s company the King’s were forced to join the scheme, then opened as what it was hoped would prove a new company altogether superior to any hitherto existing, in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

December 4th, 1682, was acted, "The Duke of Guise," with a cast as follows:—

Duke.....	Betterton.
Grillon.....	Smith.
King of France.....	Kynaston.
Duke of Mayenne.....	Jevon.
Cardinal of Guise.....	Wiltshire.
Alphonso Corso.....	Mountfort.
Aumale .....	Carlile.
Archbishop of Lyons.....	Perin.
Melanax.....	Gillow.
Malicorne.....	Percival.
Curate of Eustace.....	Underhill.
Sheriffs.....	Bright and Sandford.
Marmontier.....	Mrs. Barry.
Queen Mother.....	Lady Slingsley.

In 1683, the new company revived several plays that were the property of Killigrew. One of these was "Rule a Wife," in which Betterton played Michael Perez.

In the "Plain Dealer," "Evening's Love," "Othello," and the "Humorous Lieutenant," also, we learn he played, but Downes does not tell us the characters.

"King and no King," was also played with Betterton as Arbaces.

In 1684 was played "Valentinian," by the Earl of Rochester, an alteration from Fletcher, Betterton acting Æcius.

Also "Constantine the Great," by Lee ; Betterton as Crispus.

Also "The Atheist, or second part of the Soldier's

Fortune," by Thomas Otway, his last performanee and a very unworthy one. Betterton as Beaugard.

Also "Disappointment, or the Mother in Fashion," a comedy by Thomas Southerne; Betterton as Alphonso.

Also "Julius Caesar," revived; Betterton as Brutus.

In 1687, was played "The Lueky Chanee, or an Alderman's Bargain," a eomedy by Mrs. Behn, in which her usual indelieaey of style strongly prevails. Betterton played Gayman.

In 1688, was played "The Injured Lovers, or the Ambitious Father," a tragedy of little value by Mountfort. Betterton played Rheusanes.

In 1689, was played "Bury Fair," a comedy by Thomas Shadwell; Betterton as Lord Bellamy.

In 1690, was played "The Massaere of Paris," a tragedy by Lee, eonsidered somewhat better than most of his works. Betterton as Admiral of Francee.

Also "Don Sebastian, King of Portugal," a tragedy by J. Dryden; Betterton as Dorax.

Also "The Prophetess," an alteration from Fletcher by Betterton.

Also "Amphitryon, or the two Sosias," a fairly good comedy by Dryden; Betterton as Jupiter.

## CHAPTER VI.

Anecdote of Cibber's early days at the theatre—Betterton's good nature—Cibber's criticism of Betterton as an actor—Anecdote of Betterton and the countryman at the fair, etc.—Performance of King Arthur—Merry Devil of Islington—Innocent Impostors—Regulus—Wife's Excuse—Henry 2nd—Old Batchelor—Double Dealer—Love Triumphant—Fatal Marriage—Innocent Usurper—Reopening of Lincoln's-Inn theatre—Love for Love—Cyrus the Great—Love's a Jest—Country Wake—The Gallant—Lover's Luck—Royal Mischief—Unnatural Brother—Provoked Wife—Boadicea—Intrigues at Versailles—Innocent Mistress—Mourning Bride—Queen Catharine—Heroic Love—Beauty in Distress—Fatal Friendship—Deceiver Deceived—Xerxes—Rinaldo and Armida—Princess of Parma—Friendship Improved—Iphigenia—Henry 4, part 1—Measure for Measure—Fate of Capua—Ambitious Step-mother—Way of the World—Lady's Visiting Day—Jew of Venice—Love's Victim—Tamerlane—Altemira—Governor of Cyprus—Fair Penitent—As you Find it—Abra-Mule—Othello—Liberty Asserted—All for Love—Sir Solomon—Merry Wives of Windsor—Anatomist—Squire Trelooby—Henry 4—The Biter—The Gamester—Ulysses—The Mistake—Faithful General—Revolution of Sweden—British Enchanters—Henry 4, part 1—Lear—Maid's Tragedy—Spanish Fryar—Valentinian—Platonick Lady—Hamlet again—Almyra—Silent Woman—Julius Cæsar—Indian Emperour—Othello—Adventures of Five Hours—Carius Marius—Don Sebastian—Spanish Fryar—Phædra and Hippolitus—Henry 4th—Mithridates—Macbeth—Lear—Henry 4, part 1—Indian Emperour—Henry 8th—Othello—Love for Love—Betterton's benefit—Epilogue for the occasion—Don Sebastian—Humorous Lieutenant—Lear—Othello—Macbeth—Lear—Old Batchelor—Maid's Tragedy, last performance—Testimonies and criticisms respecting character and talent.

A LITTLE story comes in here which, as anecdotes are not over plentiful, it may be as well to relate.

“Cibber says he joined the united company this year and was admitted into the lowest rank of it: he was at that time about 19. Cross, the prompter, told Davies, that he was for some time known only by the name of Master Colley, and that after waiting impatiently a long time for the prompter’s notice, by good fortune he obtained the honour of carrying a message in some play to Betterton. Whatever was the cause, Master Colley was so terrified that the scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton asked in some anger who the young fellow was that had committed the blunder. Downes replied ‘Master Colley.’—‘Master Colley! then forfeit him.’ ‘Why, sir,’ said Downes, ‘he has no salary.’ ‘No,’ said Betterton, ‘why then put him down ten shillings a week, and forfeit him five shillings.’ To this good-natured adjustment of reward and punishment, Cibber owed the first money he ever received from the theatre.”\*

Cibber says in reference to this, “the privileges of every day seeing plays for nothing, I thought was a sufficient consideration for the best of my service, so that it was no pain to my patience that I waited full three quarters of a year before I was taken into a salary of ten shillings per week.”

This able critic gives us an interesting description of the theatre at this time, and some very excellent notices of the celebrated actors and actresses who then trod its boards. As it will be necessary to give some authoritative criticism upon the character and scope of Betterton’s genius, the following rather long quotation has been selected as the best thing of the kind within reach. It is admitted that the author was peculiarly adapted for such a task, and his

\* Davies.

remarks will be found of the highest value in estimating the great excellence of the actor before us.

“*Betterton* was an actor, as *Shakespeare* was an author, both without competitors! formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other’s genius! How *Shakespeare* wrote, all men who have a taste for nature may read, and know—but, with what higher rapture would he still be read, could they conceive how *Betterton* played him! Then might they know, the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write! Pity it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution, cannot like those of poetry, be their own record! That the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them; or at best can but faintly glimmer through the memory or imperfect attestation of a few surviving spectators. Could *how Betterton* spoke be as easily known as *what* he-spoke; then might you see the Muse of *Shakespeare* in her triumph, with all her beauties in their best array, rising into real life, and charming her beholders. But alas! since all this is so far out of the reach of description, how shall I shew you *Betterton*? Should I therefore tell you, that all the *Othellos*, *Hamlets*, *Hotspurs*, *Macbeths*, and *Brutus’s*, whom you may have seen since his time, have fallen far short of him; this still would give you no idea of his particular excellence. Let us see then, what a particular comparison may do, whether that may yet draw him nearer to you.

“You have seen a *Hamlet* perhaps, who, on the first appearance of his father’s spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express Rage and Fury, and the house has thundered with applause, though the



misguided actor was all the while (as Shakespeare terms it), tearing a passion into rags. I am the more bold to offer you this particular instance, because the late Mr. *Addison*, while I sat by him, to see this scene acted, made the same observation, asking me with some surprise, if I thought Hamlet should be in so violent a passion with the Ghost, which though it might have astonished, it had not provoked him ? for you may observe that in this beautiful speech, the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience, limited by filial reverence, to enquire into the suspected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb, and a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed, might wish or enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave ? This was the light into which *Betterton* threw this scene : which he opened with a pause of mute amazement, then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator, as to himself, and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, manly, but not braving ; his voice never rising into that seeming outrage, or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But alas ! to preserve this medium, between mouthing and meaning too little, to keep the attention more pleasingly awake, by a tempered spirit, than by a mere vehemence of voice, is of all the master-strokes of an actor the most difficult to reach. In this, none yet have equalled *Betterton*. But I am unwilling to shew his superiority only by recounting the errors of those, who now cannot answer to them, let their further failings therefore be forgotten, or rather, shall I in some measure excuse them ? for I am not yet sure, that they might not be as much owing to the false

judgment of the spectator, as the actor. While the million are so apt to be transported, when the drum of their ear is so soundly rattled ; while they take the life of elocution to lie in the strength of their lungs, it is no wonder the actor, whose end is applause, should be so often tempted at this easy rate, to excite it. Shall I go a little further ? and allow that this extreme is more pardonable than its opposite error. I mean that dangerous affectation of the monotone, or solemn sameness of pronunciation, which to my ear is insupportable ; for of all faults that so frequently pass upon the vulgar, that of flatness will have the fewest admirers. That this is an error of ancient standing seems evident by what *Hamlet* says, in his instructions to the players, viz. : *Be not too tame, neither &c.* The actor, doubtless, is as strongly tied down to the rules of Horace, as the writer.

Si vis me flere, dolendum est

Primum ipsi tibi——.

He that feels not himself the passion he would raise, will talk to a sleeping audience ; but this never was the fault of *Betterton*, and it has often amazed me, to see those who soon came after him, throw out in some parts of a character, a just and graceful spirit, which *Betterton* himself could not but have applauded. And yet in the equally shining passages of the same character, have heavily dragged the sentiment along, like a dead weight ; with a long toned voice, and absent eye, as if they had fairly forgot what they were about ; if you have never made this observation, I am contented you should not know, where to apply it.

“A further excellence in *Betterton*, was, that he could vary his spirit to the different characters he acted. Those wild impatient starts, that fierce and flashing fire, which he threw into *Hotspur*, never came from the unruffled temper of his

*Brutus* (for, I have more than once, seen a *Brutus* as warm as *Hotspur*), when the *Betterton Brutus* was provoked, in his dispute with *Cassius* his spirit flew only to his eye; his steady look alone supplied that term, which he disdained an intemperance in his voice should rise to. Thus with a settled dignity of contempt, like an unheeding rock, he repelled upon himself the foam of *Cassius*. Perhaps the very words of *Shakespeare* will better let you into my meaning:—

*Must I give way, and room, to your rash Choler?*

*Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?*

And a little after :

*There is no terror, Cassius, in your looks ! &c.*

Not, but in some parts of this scene, where he reproaches *Cassius*, his temper is not under this suppression, but opens into that warmth which becomes a man of virtue; yet this is that *Hasty Spark of Anger*, which *Brutus* himself, endeavours to excuse.

“But with whatever strength of nature, we see the poet show, at once, the philosopher and the hero, yet the image of the actor’s excellence will be still imperfect to you, unless language could put colours in our words to paint the voice with.

“*Et, si vis similem pingere, pingere sonum*, is enjoining an impossibility. The most that a *Vandycke* can arrive at, is to make his portraits of great persons seem to *think*; a *Shakespeare* goes further yet, and tells you what his pictures thought; a *Betterton* steps beyond them both, and calls them from the grave, to breathe and be themselves again, in feature, speech, and motion. When the skilful actor shews you all these powers united, and gratifies at once your eye, your ear, your understanding, to conceive the pleasure rising

from such harmony, you must have been present at it, 'tis not to be told you.

“ There cannot be a stronger proof of the charms of harmonious elocution, than the many, even unnatural scenes and flights of the false sublime it has lifted into applause. In what raptures have I seen an audience, at the furious fustian and turgid rants in *Nat. Lee's Alexander the Great!* For though I can allow this play a few great beauties, yet it is not without its extravagant blemishes. Every play of the same author has more or less of them. Let me give you a sample from this. Alexander in a full crowd of courtiers, without being occasionally called or provoked to it, falls into this rhapsody of vain glory.

*‘ Can none remember ? Yes, I know all must !*

And therefore they shall know it again.

*‘ When Glory, like the dazzling Eagle, stood  
Perched on my Beaver, in the Granic Flood,  
When Fortune's self, my standard trembling bore,  
And the pale Fates stood frightened on the Shore,  
When the Immortals on the Billows rode,  
And I myself appear'd the leading God.’*

“ When these flowing numbers came from the mouth of a *Betterton*, the multitude no more desired sense to them than our musical *connoisseurs* think it essential in the celebrate airs of an Italian opera. Does not this prove that there is very near as much enchantment in the well-governed voice of an Actor, as in the sweet pipe of an eunuch ! If I tell you there was no one tragedy, for many years, more in favour with the town than *Alexander*, to what must we impute this its command of public admiration ? Not to its intrinsic

merit, surely, if it swarms with passages like this I have shewn you. If this passage has merit, let us see what figure it would make upon canvas, what sort of picture would rise from it. If *Le Brun*, who was famous for painting the battles of this hero, had seen this lofty description, what one image could he have possibly taken from it? In what colours would he have shewn us *Glory perched upon a Beaver*? How would he have drawn *Fortune trembling*? Or, indeed, what use could he have made of *pale Fates* or *Immortals* riding upon *Billows*, with this blustering God of his own making at the *head* of them! Where, then, must have lain the Charm that once made the public so partial to this Tragedy! Why, plainly, in the Grace and Harmony of the actor's utterance. For the actor himself is not accountable for the false poetry of his author; that the hearer is to judge of, if it passes upon him, the actor can have no quarrel to it, who, if the periods given him are round, smooth, spirited, and high-sounding, even in a false passion, must throw out the same fire and grace as may be required in one justly rising from nature; where those his excellencies will be only the more pleasing, in proportion to the taste of his hearer. And I am of opinion, that to the extraordinary success of this very play, we may impute the corruption of so many actors and tragic writers as were immediately misled by it. The unskilful actor, who imagined all the merit of delivering these blasing rants lay only in the strength and strained exertion of the voice, began to tear his lungs, upon every false or slight occasion, to arrive at the same applause. And it is from hence I date our having seen the same reason prevalent for above fifty years. Thus equally misguided, too, many a barren-brained author has streamed into a frothy, flowing style, pompously rolling into

sounding periods, signifying —roundly nothing ; of which number, in some of my former labours, I am something more than suspicious that I may myself have made one. But to keep a little closer to *Betterton*.

“ When this favourite play I am speaking of, from its being too frequently acted, was worn out, and came to be deserted by the town, upon the sudden death of *Monfort*, who had played *Alexander* with success, for several years, the part was given to *Betterton*, which, under this great disadvantage of the satiety it had given, he immediately revived with so new a lustre, that for three days together it filled the house; and had his then declining strength been equal to the fatigue the action gave him, it probably might have doubled its success, an uncommon instance of the power and intrinsic merit of an actor. This I mention, not only to prove what irresistible pleasure may arise from a judicious elocution, with scarce sense to assist it, but to shew you too, that though *Betterton* never wanted fire and force, when his character demanded it, yet, where it was not demanded, he never prostituted his power to the low ambition of a false applause. And further, that when, from a too advanced age, he resigned that toilsome part of *Alexander*, the play, for many years after, never was able to impose upon the public; and I look upon his so particularly supporting the false fire and extravagancies of that character, to be a more surprising proof of his skill, than his being eminent in those of *Shakespeare*, because there, truth and nature coming to his assistance, he had not the same difficulties to combat, and consequently, we must be less amazed at his success, where we are more able to account for it.

“ Notwithstanding the extraordinary power he shewed in blowing *Alexander* once more into a blaze of admiration,



Betterton had so just a sense of what was true or false applause, that I have heard him say, he never thought any kind of it equal to an attentive silence; that there were many ways of deceiving an audience into a loud one; but to keep them hushed and quiet was an applause which only truth and merit could arrive at: of which art there never was an equal master to himself. From these various excellencies, he had so full a possession of the esteem and regard of his auditors, that upon his entrance into every scene he seemed to seize upon the eyes and ears of the giddy and inadvertent. To have talked or looked another way would then have been thought insensibility or ignorance. In all his soliloquies of moment, the strong intelligence of his attitude and aspect, drew you into such an impatient gaze and eager expectation that you almost imbibed the sentiment with your eye, before the ear could reach it.

“As Betterton is the centre to which all my observations upon action tend, you will give me leave, under his character, to enlarge upon that head. In the just delivery of poetical numbers, particularly where the sentiments are pathetic, it is scarce credible upon how minute an article of sound depends their greatest beauty or inaffection. The voice of a singer is not more strictly tied to time and tune than that of an actor in theatrical elocution: the least syllable too long, or too slightly dwelt upon, in a period, depreciates it to nothing: which very syllable if rightly touched, shall, like the heightening stroke of light from a master's pencil, give life and spirit to the whole. I never heard a line in tragedy come from *Betterton* wherein my judgment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied; which since his time, I cannot equally say of any one actor whatsoever: not but it is possible to be much his



inferior, with great excellencies, which I shall observe in another place. Had it been practicable to have tied down the clattering hands of all the ill-judges who were commonly the majority of an audience, to what amazing perfection might the English theatre have arrived, with so just an actor as *Betterton* at the head of it ! If what was truth only could have been applauded, how many noisy actors had shook their plumes with shame, who, from the injudicious approbation of the multitude, have bawled and strutted in the place of merit ? If, therefore, the bare speaking voice has such allurements in it, how much less ought we to wonder, however we may lament, that the sweeter notes of vocal music should so have captivated the politer world into an apostacy from sense, to an idolatry of sound. Let us enquire from whence this enchantment arises. I am afraid it may be too naturally accounted for : for when we complain, that the finest music, purchased at such vast expense, is so often thrown away upon the most miserable poetry, we seem not to consider that, when the movement of the Air and Tone of the voice are exquisitely harmonious, though we regard not one word of what we hear, yet the power of the melody is so busy in the heart, that we naturally annex ideas to it of our own creation, and, in some sort, become ourselves the Poet to the Composer ; and what poet is so dull as not to be charmed with the child of his own fancy ? So that there is even a kind of language in agreeable sounds, which, like the aspect of beauty without words, speaks and plays with the imagination. While this taste therefore is so naturally prevalent, I doubt, to propose remedies for it, were but to give laws to the winds or advice to inamoratos, and however gravely we may assert that profit ought always to be inseparable from the delight of the

theatre, nay, admitting that the pleasure would be heightened by the uniting them, yet, while instruction is so little the concern of the auditor, how can we hope that so choice a commodity will come to a market where there is so seldom a demand for it?

“It is not to the actor, therefore, but to the vitiated and low taste of the spectator that the corruptions of the stage (of what kind soever) have been owing. If the public, by whom they must live, had spirit enough to discountenance and declare against all the trash and fopperies they have been so frequently fond of, both the actors and the authors, to the best of their power, must naturally have served their daily table with sound and wholesome diet. But I have not yet done with my article of Elocution.

“As we have sometimes great composers of music who cannot sing, we have as frequently great writers who cannot read, and though without the nicest ear, no man can be master of poetical numbers, yet the best ear in the world will not always enable him to pronounce them. Of this truth, *Dryden*, our first great master of verse and harmony, was a strong instance. When he brought his play of *Amphytrion* to the stage, I heard him give it his first reading to the actors, in which, though it is true, he delivered the plain sense of every period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believed when I affirm it.

“On the contrary, *Lee*, far his inferior in poetry, was so pathetic a reader of his own scenes, that I have been informed by an actor, who was present, that while *Lee* was reading to Major Mohun, at a rehearsal, Mohun, in the warmth of his admiration, threw down his part, and said, unless I were able to play it as well as you read it, to what

purpose should I undertake it? And yet this very author, whose elocution raised such admiration in so capital an actor, when he attempted to be an actor himself, soon quitted the stage in an honest despair of ever making any profitable figure there. From all this, I would infer, that let our conception of what we are to speak be ever so just, and the ear ever so true, yet, when we are to deliver it to an audience (I will leave fear out of the question) there must go along with the whole a natural freedom and becoming grace, which is easier to conceive than to describe, for without this inexpressible somewhat, the performance will come out oddly disguised, or somewhere defectively, unsurprising to the hearer. Of this defect, too, I will give you yet a stranger instance, which you will allow fear could not be the occasion of. If you remember *Estcourt*, you must have known that he was long enough upon the stage not to be under the least restraint from fear in his performance. This man was so amazing and extraordinary a mimic that no man or woman, from the coquette to the privy-counsellor, ever moved or spoke before him, but he could carry their voice, look, mien, and motion instantly into another company. I have heard him make long harangues, and form various arguments, even in the manner of thinking, of an eminent pleader at the Bar, with every the least article and singularity of his utterance so perfectly imitated, that he was the very *alter ipse*, scarce to be distinguished from his original. Yet more; I have seen, upon the margin of the written part of *Falstaff*, which he acted, his own notes and observations upon almost every speech of it, describing the true spirit of the humour, and with what tone of voice, look and gesture each of them ought to be delivered. Yet, in his execution upon the stage, he seemed to have lost all the

just ideas he had formed of it, and almost through the character, laboured under a heavy load of flatness, in a word, with all his skill in mimicry, and knowledge of what ought to be done, he never, upon the stage, could bring it truly into practice, but was upon the whole, 'a languid, unaffecting actor.

"After I have shewn you so many necessary qualifications, not one of which can be spared in true theatrical elocution, and have at the same time proved that with the assistance of them all united, the whole may still come forth defective, what talents shall we say will infallibly form an actor? This I confess, is one of nature's secrets, too deep for me to dive into; let us content ourselves, therefore, with affirming that genius which nature only gives, only can complete him. This genius, then, was so strong in Betterton, that it shone out in every speech and motion of him. Yet voice and person are such necessary supports to it, that, by the multitude, they have been preferred to genius itself, or at least, often mistaken for it. Betterton had a voice of that kind, which gave more spirit to terror than to the softer passions: of more strength than melody. The rage and jealousy of *Othello* became him better than the sighs and tenderness of *Castalio*, for though in *Castalio* he only excelled others, in *Othello* he excelled himself, which you will easily believe, when you consider, that in spite of his complexion, *Othello* has more natural beauties than the best actor can find in all the magazine of poetry, to animate his power and delight his judgment with.

"The person of this excellent actor was suitable to his voice, more manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle stature, inclining to the corpulent, of a serious and penetrating aspect, his limbs nearer the athletic than the delicate

proportion; yet, however formed, there arose from the harmony of the whole a commanding mien of majesty, which the fairer faced or (as Shakespeare calls them) the *curled* darlings of his time, ever wanted something to be equal masters of. There was, some years ago, to be had, almost in every print shop, a *mezzotint* from *Kneller*, extremely like him.

“In all I have said of *Betterton*, I confine myself to the time of his strength and highest power in action, that you may make allowances from what he was able to execute at fifty, to what you might have seen of him at past seventy; for though to the last he was without his equal, he might not then be equal to his former self, yet so far was he from being ever overtaken, that for many years after his decease, I seldom saw any of his parts, in Shakespeare, supplied by others, but it drew from me the lamentation of Ophelia upon Hamlet’s being unlike what she had seen him.

Ah! woe is me

’T have seen what I have seen, see what I see!”

The author of “An Apology for the Life of Mr. T..... C..... being a “Proper Sequel,” to the Apology for the life of Cibber (pub. in 1740) in allusion to the foregoing remarks about “some who can write being unable to read,” &c., says, “I could on this head add several curious anecdotes of my own, and from experience in the Stage Affairs prove, that as some who *write* can’t *read*, so there are others who *read* that can’t *write*; and yet some who can both *read*, *act*, and *write*. How far indeed these *reading*, *writing*, *acting*, *qualifications* may be conjoined in one and the same person, this *Apologetical History*, as well as that of Mr. Colley Cibber will be some humble kind of *Demonstration of*: some indeed may think that by these *Memoirs* we may *blaze to Posterity*

*in a ludicrous Lustre, and that our Observations and Digressions signify, roundly, Nothing ; yet to the drum of the Ear will I roundly rattle,*

*“A Fico for thy Criticism, vile Wight,*

*You say we Print indeed yet cannot Write.*

*I, myself, I and Father print indeed,*

*But what we print we wrote, and what we wrote you read.*

“—*But halt a little.*—I had something to say on the above description of *Betterton* : it may be in the greatest part, or even in the whole, just ; yet is it not carrying the Elogium too far, to think, nor *Hart*, nor *Mohun*, nor any in their Company, nor some before them equalled him, perhaps surpassed him ! Mr. Cibber says none has since arrived at his Perfections ; this very possibly may be, yet very likely every succeeding Age will think in the same manner of other Actors. As *Mr. Hart’s* and *Mohun’s* excellencies were forgot by degrees, *Mr. Betterton’s* arose ; when his failed by his death, *Mr. Booth* was thought to be a very great successor : in in short they who remember *Betterton*, shake their heads at *Booth* ; they that are in full memory of *Booth*, with pitiful scorn see some modern performers, who, half a century hence, may be highly admired in their turn, in prejudice to *New Adepts* in the Profession : this, say what you will, is a prejudice of nature, the impressions we first receive are so deeply affecting, that even, having judgment afterwards, it imposes on it : prejudices in *theatrical affairs* are so imperceptibly got, and so obstinately maintained, as those in religion, and we may say of the first Representation we see, what *Dryden* says of our first Education :—

*“ ‘ By Education most men are mis-led,*

*We so believe because we so were bred ;*



*The Priest continues what the Nurse began,  
And thus the Child imposes on the man.'*

"But really *Betterton*, besides his excellencies of *nature* and *judgment*, and other great advantages, for though he is called an *original*, he had seen all the *old players*, who were very excellent, and those were remembered who were *originals of Shakespear*.—What aid such remembrance might be, take from the following *Anecdotes*.

"'In the *Tragedy of Hamlet*,' says old *Downes*, the part of *Hamlet* was perform'd by *Mr. Betterton*, *Sir William Davenant* having seen *Mr. Taylor* of the *Black-Fryars Company* act it, who was instructed by the Author, *Mr. Shakespear*, taught *Mr. Betterton* in every *article* of it, which, by his exact performance of it, gain'd him esteem and reputation superlative to all other *Players*.'

"Thus again this ancient, but faithful *Memoirist* delivers himself concerning the Play of *Henry the Eighth*.

"'The part of the king was all new cloath'd in a proper Habit, and so right and justly done by *Mr. Betterton*, he being instructed in it by *Sir William Davenant*, who had it from old *Mr. Lowen*, that had his instructions from *Mr. Shakespeare* himself, that I dare and will aver, none can or will come near him in this Age in the performance of that Part.'

"The reader will observe, that in theatrical *Memoirists*, a simplicity of style in plain narration too often occurs; but he will pardon this bold disregard for grammatical correctness, if through our rapidity of thought, he investigates the meaning: he will see then how in *Hamlet* *Mr. Betterton* came by that judgment, which *Mr. Cibber* takes up some pages in extolling; he will find those actors who have been *Originals* in Parts, are thought to have excelled to the highest



Degree : and Mr. Betterton might have been as excellent in those Parts in which he was an Original, as any other Actor before him ; yet an Actor after him, who has an original Part, and consequently thereby becomes an Original, may be thought so far to excel, that few Actors, while he is remembered, shall, with any equal judicious approbation, succeed in that Part.—On the whole, original Parts make an Actor, and they who have seen a perfect set of Actors, can only judge of succeeding ones by them : the

*Laudator Temporis acti*

is not merely confined to old men ; by natural prejudice we catch the appurtenance to old age, when we have scarce passed the verge of youth. But to conclude of *Mr. Betterton*, with a greater compliment than any other paid him, though the epilogue to his last benefit, wrote by *Mr. Rowe* was a very good one, take this description of him from a Prologue by Dryden :—

“ ‘ He like the setting Sun, still shoots a glimm’ring Ray,  
Like ancient Rome, majestic in Decay.’ ”

“ Mr. C. Cibber’s long digression has let me into this : but as, in his account of Betterton, his sentiments on theatrical Action are chiefly expressed ; I have ventured to subjoin these sentiments of mine to his account, that I may not be so tedious on this subject in another place.”

To get a just view of the subject, it may be well to give a specimen of what another well-known critic has said ; let us, therefore, hear what Aston says in his supplement to Cibber’s “ *Lives of the Actors*,” we shall probably think that his conclusion to a somewhat adverse criticism is commendatory of the actor rather than otherwise.

“Mr. Betterton (although a superlative good actor) laboured under ill figure, being clumsily made, having a great head, a short thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat short arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach. His left hand frequently lodged in his breast, between his coat and waistcoat, while, with his right, he prepared his speech. His actions were few, but just.—He had little eyes, and a broad face, a little pock-fretten ; a corpulent body, and thick legs, with large feet. He was better to meet than to follow ; for his aspect was serious, venerable and majestic ; in his latter time a little paralytic. His voice was low and grumbling ; yet he could tune it by an artful *climax*, which enforced universal attention, even from fops and orange-girls. He was incapable of dancing, even in a country dance ; as was Mrs. Barry : but their good qualities were more than equal to their deficiencies. While Mrs. Bracegirdle sung very agreeably in the Loves of Mars and Venus, and danced in a country dance, as well as Mr. Wilks, though not with so much art and foppery, but like a well bred gentlewoman. Mr. Betterton was the most extensive actor, from *Alexander* or *Sir John Falstaff* ; but in that last character, he wanted the waggery of Estcourt, the drollery of Harper, and sallaciousness of Jack Evans. But then, Estcourt was too trifling ; Harper had too much of the Bartholomew-fair ; and Evans misplaced his humour.—Thus, you see what flaws are in bright diamonds : and I have often wished that Mr. Betterton would have resigned the part of Hamlet to some young actor (who might have personated, though not have acted, it better) for, when he threw himself at Ophelia’s feet, he appeared a little too grave for a young student, lately come from the University of Wirtemberg ; and his *repartees* seemed rather as *Apoph-*

*thegms* from a sage philosopher, than the sporting flashes of a young Hamlet; and no one else could have pleased the town, he was so rooted in their opinion. His younger contemporary (Betterton 63, Powel 40, years old) Powel attempted several of Betterton's parts, as Alexander, Jaffier, &c., but lost his credit; as in Alexander, he maintained not the dignity of a king, but out-Heroded Herod; and in his poisoned mad scene, *out-rav'd all probability*; while Betterton kept his passion under, and shewed it most (as fume smoaks most when stifled). Betterton from the time he was dressed, to the end of the play, kept his mind in the same temperament and adaptness as the present character required.—If I was to write of him all day I should still remember fresh matter in his behalf."

Before proceeding with the plays in which our actor took parts we may relate the following amusing anecdote which will no doubt be found acceptable.

Mr. Betterton had a small Farm near Reading, in the County of Berks: and a countryman came, in the time of *Bartholomew-Fair*, to pay his Rent.—Mr. Betterton took him to the Fair, and going to one Crawley's Puppet-Shew, offered Two Shillings for himself and Roger, his tenant. "*No, no, sir,*" said Crawley, "*we never take money of one another.*" This affronted Mr. Betterton, who threw down the money and they entered. Roger was greatly diverted with Punch and caused a great noise; saying that he would drink with him, for he was a merry fellow. Mr. Betterton told him he was only a puppet, made up of sticks and rags. However, Roger still cried out that he would go and drink with Punch. When he was taken behind, where the puppets hung up, he swore he thought Punch had been

live. "However," said he, "though he be but sticks and rags, I'll give him sixpence to drink my health." At night Mr. Betterton went to the theatre, where was played the "Orphan." "Well," said Mr. B., "how do you like this play, Roger." "Why, I don't know," said Roger, "it's well enough for sticks and rags." (Betterton and Mrs. Barry were both acting in the piece).

We now reach 1691, when was performed a play which Dr. Johnson says does not seem to have ever been brought on the stage (a most singular mistake) *viz.*, "King Arthur; or, The British Worthy," a Dramatic Opera by John Dryden.

King Arthur.....	Betterton.
Oswald .....	Williams.
Merlin .....	Kynaston.
Osmond.....	Sandford.
Duke of Cornwall.....	Hodgson.
Grimbald .....	Bowman.
Philadel .....	Mrs. Butter.
Emmeline.....	Mrs. Braecgirdle.

Also the anonymous comedy, "The Merry Devil of Edmonton," Betterton as Sir Ralph Jerningham.

In 1692 was played "The Innocent Impostors," a tragedy attributed to Brady; Betterton as Gunderie (King of the Vandals), and Mrs. Betterton as Amalazontha (Queen of the Vandals).

Also "Regulus," a tragedy by John Crowne, Betterton as Regulus, the Consul.

Also, "The Wives' Excuse," by Thomas Southern, Betterton as Lovemore.

Also, "Henry 2nd, King of England," attributed to Bancroft, but signed in the dedication, W. Mountfort; Betterton as the King.

In 1693 (Malone says in January) Congreve's play, "The Old Batchelor," came out, with Betterton as Heartwell.

Also (Nov., according to Malone) Congreve's "Double Dealer;" Betterton as Maskwell.

Also, Dryden's "Love Triumphant;" Betterton as Alphonso, and Mrs. Betterton as Ximena.

In 1694 was played Southerne's tragedy, "The Fatal Marriage;" Betterton as Villeroy. The name of this play, some years afterwards, was changed to Isabella.

Also, Banks's tragedy, "The Innocent Usurper; or, The Death of Lady Jane Gray;" Betterton as Lord Gilford Dudley, Mrs. Betterton as the Duchess of Suffolk. This is the last appearance of Mrs. Betterton's name.

In 1695, somewhere in March or April, was re-opened the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields under the licence alluded to on a previous page, with Congreve's "Love for Love;" Betterton as Valentine. "This play," says Downes, "was superior in success to most of the precedent plays, it was extraordinary well acted and took 13 days successively."

In 1696, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, was acted Banks's tragedy of "Cyrus the Great ; or, the Tragedy of Love ;" Betterton as Cyrus.

Also, "Love's a Jest," by Motteux ; Betterton as Railmore.

Also, Dogget's comedy, "The Country Wake ;" Betterton as Woodville.

Also, Granville's comedy, "The She Gallants ;" Betterton as Bellamour.

In 1696 was played Dilke's comedy, "Lover's Luck," a play of little value and soon withdrawn ; Betterton as Bellair.

Also, Mrs. Manley's "Royal Mischief ;" Betterton as Osman.

In 1697 was acted Filmer's "Unnatural Brother," an unsuccessful tragedy ; Betterton as Granmont.

Also (about May) "The Provoked Wife," by Sir John Vanbrugh ; Betterton as Sir John Brute.

Also, Hopkins's "Boadicea, Queen of Britain ;" Betterton as Cassibelan, the General.

Also, "Intrigues at Versailles," by Dufey ; Betterton as the Duke de Sanserre.

Also, Mrs. Pix's comedy, "The Innocent Mistress ;" Betterton as Sir Charles Beauclair.

Also, Congreve's tragedy, "The Mourning Bride," a play that was evidently popular, if not altogether good, as it run 13 days without interruption. Betterton played Osmyn.

In 1698, at Lincoln's Inn, was played Mrs. Pix's inferior tragedy of "Queen Catharine ; or, the Ruins of Love ;" Betterton as Owen Tudor.

Also, Lord Lansdowne's tragedy, "Heroic Love ;" Betterton as Agamemnon.

Also, Mattheux's tragedy, "Beauty in Distress ;" Betterton as Don Vincentio.

Also, Mrs. Trotter's "Fatal Friendship ;" Betterton as Gramont.

Also, Mrs. Pix's comedy, "The Deceiver Deceived ;" Betterton as Melito Bondi.

In 1699, at Lincoln's Inn, Cibber's tragedy, "Xerxes ;" Betterton as Artabanus, a General.

Also, Dennis's "Rinaldo and Armida." Betterton as Rinaldo, the hero of the Christian Army.

Also, Smith's tragedy "The Princess of Parma." Betterton as Deria, the famous Admiral of Genoa.



Also, Hopkin's tragedy, "Friendship Improved." Betterton as Zoilus.

Also, Dennis's unsuccessful tragedy, "Iphigenia." Betterton as Orestes.

In 1700 at Lincoln's Inn, revived with alterations by Betterton, "Henry 4th, part first." Betterton playing Falstaff.

Also, "Measure for Measure." Betterton as Angelo.

Also, Southerne's tragedy, "The Fate of Capua." Betterton as Virginius.

Also, Rowe's tragedy, "The Ambitious Step-mother." Betterton as Memnon.

Also, Congreve's comedy, considered a good one though badly received, "The Way of the World." Betterton as Fainall.

In 1701 was acted Burnaby's comedy the "Lady's Visiting Day." Betterton as Courtine.

Also, "The Jew of Venice," altered by Granville from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Betterton as Bassanio.

Also, a tragedy attributed to Gildon, called, "Louis' Victim, or the Queen of Wales." Betterton as Rhesus, the King.

In 1702 was acted Rowe's tragedy, "Tamerlane." Betterton as Tamerlane.

Also, "Altemira," a posthumous tragedy by the first Earl of Orrery. Betterton as Clorimon.

In 1703 was played, "The Governour of Cyprus," a tragedy by Oldmixon. Betterton as Iopano.

Also, Rowe's tragedy, "The Fair Penitent," described by Dr. Johnson as "one of the most pleasing tragedies," yet nevertheless one that did not succeed. Betterton played Horatio.

April 28th, 1703, the Earl of Orrery's comedy, "As you Find it." Betterton as Bevil.

In January, 1704, the tragedy of "Abra-Mule, or Love," attributed to Dr. Trapp, was acted for 14 days. Betterton as Mahomet.

On Feb. 19th, for Dogget's benefit, Betterton acted Othello.

On Feb. 24th, was acted Dennis's tragedy, "Liberty Asserted." Betterton as Miramont.

We now get a list of 4 plays, from Downes, which were commanded to be acted at Court by the players of both houses.

1. "All for Love." Betterton as Anthony.
2. "Sir Solomon." Betterton as Sir Solomon.
3. "Merry Wives of Windsor." Betterton as Falstaff.
4. "The Anatomist." Cast not recorded.

March 16th, 1704. Confusion occurs here in the accounts, Betterton being put down as Crimalhaz in Liberty Asserted, whereas that part was in the Empress of Morocco.

March 30th, 1704. The farce of "Squire Trelooby," was acted. Betterton as Lovewell.

Nov. 9th, 1704. "Henry 4th." Betterton as Falstaff.

Dec. 4th, 1704. Rowe's comedy, "The Biter." Betterton as Sir Timothy Tallapoy.

Feb. 22nd, 1705. "The Gamester." Betterton as Lovewell.

Nov. 23rd, 1705. "Ulysses." Betterton as Ulysses.

Dec. 27th, 1705. "The Mistake." Betterton as Don Alvarez.

Jan. 3rd, 1706. "The Faithful General." Betterton as Marus.

Feb. 7th, 1706. "The Revolution of Sweden." Betterton as Count Arwide.

Feb. 21, 1706. "The British Enchanters, or No Magick like Love." Betterton as Cœlius.

Oct. 26th, 1706. "Henry 4th, part 1st." Betterton as Falstaff. (At Haymarket.)

Oct. 30th, 1706. Betterton as King Lear. (At Haymarket.)

Nov. 2nd, 1706. "The Maid's Tragedy." Betterton as Melantius. (At Haymarket.)

Nov. 13th, 1706. "The Spanish Fryar." Betterton as Torrismond.

Nov. 21. "Valentinian." Betterton as Ælius.

Nov. 25th. "The Platonick Lady." Betterton as Sir Thomas Beaumont.

Dec. 10. Betterton as Hamlet again.

Dec. 16. "Almyna, or the Arabian Vow," a tragedy by Mrs. Manley. Betterton as Caliph Almanzor.

Jan. 1st, 1707. "The Silent Woman." Betterton as Morose.

Jan. 14th. "Julius Cæsar." Betterton as Brutus.

Jan. 25th. "The Indian Emperour." Betterton as Montezuma.

Jan. 28th. "Othello." Betterton as that character.

Feb. 3rd, 1707. "The Adventures of Five Hours." Betterton as Don Antonio.

"Feb. 18. "Caius Marius." Betterton as Marius Senior.

March 6, 1707. "Don Sebastian." Betterton as Dorax.

March 18. Betterton in Spanish Fryar.

April 21, 1707. "Phædra and Hippolitus." Betterton as Theseus.

Nov. 19, 1707. "Henry 4th." Betterton as Falstaff.

At Drury Lane, March 22, 1708. Betterton acted Mithridates, for Mrs. Rogers's benefit.

Oct. 16. Betterton as Macbeth. (Drury Lane.)

Oct. 21. Betterton as King Lear. (Drury Lane.)

Oct. 28. "Henry 4th, part 1st." Betterton as Falstaff. (Drury Lane.)

Jan. 7th, 1709, at Drury Lane, "The Indian Emperour."  
Betterton as Montezuma.

Jan. 26th. "Henry 8th." Betterton as the King. (Drury Lane.)

March 24. Betterton as Othello. (Drury Lane.)

April 7th, for Betterton's benefit, "Love for Love." Betterton as Valentine. (Drury Lane.)

On this occasion the boxes and pit were thrown into one, and no person was admitted without a ticket, which Genest says were a guinea each, others say that it was only half that amount.

"This was Betterton's famous benefit—there had not been known so great a concourse of persons of distinction as at that time. The stage itself was covered with Gentlemen and Ladies, and when the curtain was drawn, it discovered even there a very splendid audience—all the parts were acted to perfection; and no one was guilty of the affectation to insert witticisms of his own." (Tatler and Genest.)

## EPILOGUE

Spoken by Mrs. Barry

At the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, April 7, 1709,  
At her playing in Love for Love; with Mrs. Braccgirdle,  
For the Benefit of Mr. Betterton.

Written by N. Rowe, Esq.

As some brave knight, who once with spear and shield  
Had sought renown in many a well fought field,  
But now no more with sacred fame inspir'd,  
Was to a peaceful hermitage retir'd;

There, if by chance disastrous tales he hears  
 Of Matron's wrongs, and captive Virgin's tears,  
 He feels soft pity urge his gen'rous breast,  
 And vows once more to succour the distress'd.  
 Buckled in mail he sallies on the plain  
 And turns him to the feat of arms again.

So've to former leagues of Friendship true,  
 Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu,  
 To aid old Thomas, and to pleasure you. }  
 Like errant damsels boldly we engage,  
 Arm'd, as you see for the defenceless stage.  
 Time was, when this good man no help did lack,  
 And scorn'd that any She should hold his Back.  
 But now, so age and frailty have ordained  
 By two at once he's forc'd to be sustain'd.  
 You see what failing nature brings man to,  
 And yet let none insult, for ought we know, }  
 She may not wear so well with some of you :  
 Though old, you find his strength is not clean past,  
 But true as steel, he's Mettle to the last.  
 If better he perform'd in days of yore,  
 Yet now he give's you all that's in his power, }  
 What can the youngest of you all do more ? }

What he has been, tho' present praise be dumb  
 Shall haply be a *Theme* in times to come,  
 As now we talk of Roscius and of *Rome*.  
 Had you with-held your favours on this night,  
 Old Shakespear's Ghost had ris'n to do him right.  
 With indignation had you seen him frown  
 Upon a worthless, witless, tasteless Town ;

Griev'd and repining you had heard him say  
 Why are the Muse's Labours cast away?  
 Why did I only write what only he could play?

But since like friends to wit, thus throng'd you meet  
 Go on and make the gen'rous work complete;  
 Be true to Merit, and still own his Cause,  
 Find something for him more than bare applause.  
 In just remembrance of your pleasures past,  
 Be kind, and give him a discharge at last.  
 In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,  
 And hang his consecrated Buskin here.

April 9th. "Don Sebastian." Betterton as Dorax.  
 (Drury Lane.)

April 11. "The Humorous Lieutenant." Betterton as  
 Leontius. For Mrs. Bradshaw's benefit. (Drury Lane.)

April 27th. Betterton as King Lear. (Drury Lane.)

Sep. 15, 1709. At Haymarket. Betterton as Othello.

Dec. 17. Betterton as Macbeth. (Haymarket.)

Feb. 4, 1710. At the Haymarket, Betterton as King  
 Lear.

March 9th. At Haymarket, Betterton played the old  
 Batchelor.

April 13, 1710. At the Haymarket, for Betterton's bene-  
 fit, "The Maid's Tragedy."

Melantius ..... Betterton.

Amintor..... Wilks.



Calianax..... Pinkethman.  
 Evadne ..... Mrs. Barry.

Let the scene presented this night be described in the beautiful words of Dr. Doran, than which, nothing could be better.

“It is the 13th of April, 1710—his benefit night; and the tears are in the lady’s (his aged wife’s) eyes, and a painful sort of smile on her trembling lips, for Betterton kisses her as he goes forth that afternoon to take leave, as it proved of the stage for ever. He is in such pain from gout that he can scarcely walk to his carriage, and how is he to enact the noble and fiery Melantius, in that ill-named drama of horror, ‘The Maid’s Tragedy?’ Hoping for the best, the old player, is conveyed to the theatre, built by Sir John Vanbrugh, in the Haymarket, the site of which is now occupied by the Opera-house. Through the stage door he is carried in loving arms to his dressing room. At the end of an hour Wilks is there, and Pinkethman, and Mrs. Barry, all dressed for their parts, and agreeably disappointed to find the Melantius of the night robed, armoured, and besworded, with one foot in a buskin, and the other in a slipper. To enable him even to wear the later, he had first thrust his inflamed foot into water; but stout as he seemed, trying his strength to and fro in the room, the hand of death was at that moment descending on the grandest of English actors.

“The house arose to receive him who had delighted themselves, their sires, and their grandsires. The audience were packed ‘like Norfolk biffins.’ The edifice itself was only five years old, and when it was a building, people laughed at the folly which reared a new theatre in the country, instead of in London;—for in 1705 all beyond the rural haymarket was

open field, straight away westward and northward. That such a house could ever be filled was set down as an impossibility ; but the achievement was accomplished on this eventful benefit night ; when the popular favourite was about to utter his last words, and to belong thenceforward only to the history of the stage he had adorned.

“ There was a shout which shook him, as Lysippus uttered the words, ‘ Noble Melantius,’ which heralded his coming. Every word which could be applied to himself was marked by a storm of applause, and when Melantius said of Amintor :—

‘ His youth did promise much, and his ripe years  
Will see it all performed,’

a murmuring comment ran round the house, that this had been effected by Betterton himself. Again, when he bids Amintor ‘ hear thy friend, who has more years than thou,’ there were probably few who did not wish that Betterton were as young as Wilks : but when he subsequently thundered forth the famous passage, ‘ My heart will never fail me,’ there was a very tempest of excitement, which was carried to its utmost height, in thundering peal on peal of unbridled approbation, as the great Rhodian gazed full on the house, exclaiming,

My heart  
And limbs are still the same : my will as great  
To do you service ! ”

“ No one doubted more than a fractional part of the assertion, and Betterton, acting to the end under a continued

fire of 'bravoes !' may have thrown more than the original meaning into the phrase :—

“ ‘ That little word was worth all the sounds  
That ever I shall hear again ! ’ ”

Few were the words he was ever destined to hear again ; and the subsequent prophecy of his own certain and proximate death, on which the curtain slowly descended, was fulfilled eight and forty hours after they were uttered.

By the Benefit of 1709, when Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Barry, both of whom had left the theatre, returned for that night and helped him to the assistance he was so much in need of, he cleared as much as 500*l.*, and a promise was made the effort should be repeated annually as long as he lived. Once more only did he experience the warm-hearted generosity of the players and an admiring public. The effort of this night was too much for him, and in the struggle to relieve the acute paroxysms of gout, which had hitherto raged in his foot, the disease flew to his stomach and death speedily followed.

“ Such was the close of a career which had commenced fifty-one years before ! Few other actors of eminence have kept the stage, with the public favour, for so extended a period, with the exception of Cave, Underhill, Quin, Macklin, King, and in the later times, Bartley and Cooper, most of whom at least accomplished their half century. The record of that career affords many a lesson and valuable suggestion to young actors.”\*

On the 2nd of May, 1710, his remains were interred with much pomp and ceremony in that last resting-place of so

\* Doran.

many of England's illustrious dead, Westminster Abbey, and an account of the solemnity, with a tribute to his memory, appeared in the *Tatler*, which, it has been said, "will outlast even brasen monuments and perhaps the very Abbey itself."

"From my own apartment, May 2nd, 1710.

"Having received notice that the famous actor Mr. *Betterton* was to be interred this evening in the cloysters near *Westminster Abbey*, I was resolved to walk thither, and see the last office done to a man whom I had always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature, than from the arguments of the most solid Philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets, I had ever read.

"As the rude and untaught multitude are no way wrought upon more effectually than by seeing public punishments and executions, so men of letters and education feel their humanity most forcibly exercised when they attend the obsequies of men who had arrived at any perfection in liberal accomplishments. Theatrical action is to be esteemed as such, except it be objected, that we cannot call that an art which cannot be attained by art. Voice, stature, motion, and other gifts must be very bountifully bestowed by nature, or labour and industry will but push the unhappy endeavour in that way, the further off his wishes.

"Such an actor as Mr. *Betterton* ought to be recorded with the same respect as *Roscius* among the *Romans*. The greatest orator has thought fit to quote his judgment and celebrate his life. *Roscius* was the example to all that would form themselves into proper and winning behaviour. His action was so well adapted to the sentiments he ex-

pressed, that the youth of *Rome* thought they wanted only to be virtuous to be as graceful in their appearance as *Roscius*. The imagination took a lovely impression of what was great and good, and they who never thought of setting up for the art of imitation, became themselves imitable characters.

“There is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming a free-born people as that of a theatre. Tully reports that the celebrated player, of whom I am speaking, used frequently to say, *the perfection of an actor is only to become what he is doing*. Young men who are too inattentive to receive lectures, are irresistibly taken with performances. Hence it is that I extremely lament the little relish the gentry of this nation have at present for the just and noble representations in some of our tragedies. The operas which are of late introduced, can leave no trace behind them that can be of service beyond the present moment. To sing and to dance are accomplishments very few have any thoughts of practising; but to speak justly and move gracefully is what every man thinks he does perform, or wishes he did.

“I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. *Betterton* in any of the occasions in which he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief of *Othello*; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers *Desdemona* makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and to convince him, that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene, will find that

he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakspeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent and broken sentences ; but a reader that has seen Betterton act, observes there could not be a word added ; that longer speech had been unnatural, nay, impossible, in Othello's circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that while I walked in the cloysters, I thought of him with the same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had in real life done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in ; and I began to be extremely afflicted, that *Brutus* and *Cassius* had any difference, that *Hotspur's* gallantry was so unfortunate, and that the mirth and good humour of *Falstaff* could not exempt him from the grave. Nay, this occasion in me, who look upon the distinctions amongst men to be merely scenical, raised reflections upon the emptiness of all human perfection and greatness in general, and I could not but regret that the sacred heads which lie buried in the neighbourhood of this little portion of earth in which my poor old friend is deposited, are returned to dust as well as he, and that there is no difference in the grave between the imaginary and the real monarch. This made me say of human life itself with Macbeth :—

“ ‘ *To-morrow, to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
 Creeps in a stealing Pace from Day to Day,  
 To the last Moment of recorded Time !  
 And all our Yesterdays have lighted Fools  
 To their Eternal Night ! Out, out, short Candle !  
 Life's but a Walking Shadow, a poor Player,*



*That struts and frets his Hour upon the Stage,  
And then is heard no more.'*

"The mention I have here made of *Mr. Betterton*, for whom I had, as long as I have known any thing, a very great esteem and gratitude for the pleasure he gave me, can do him no good, but it may possibly be of service to the unhappy woman he has left behind him, to have it known that this great tragedian was never in a scene half so moving as the circumstances of his affairs created at his departure. His wife, after the cohabitation of forty years in the strictest amity, has long pined away with a sense of his decay as well in his person as his little fortune, and in proportion to that she has herself decayed both in her health and her reason. Her husband's death, added to her age and infirmities, would certainly have determined her life; but that the greatness of her distress has been her relief, by a present deprivation of her senses. This absence of reason is her best defence against age, sorrow, poverty, and sickness. I dwell upon this account so distinctly in obedience to a certain great spirit, who hides her name, and has by letter applied to me to recommend to her some object of compassion, from whom she may be concealed.

"This I think is a proper occasion for exerting such heroick generosity; and as there is an ingenuous shame in those who have known better fortune to be reduced to receive obligations, as well as a becoming pain in the truly generous to receive thanks in this case, both those delicacies are preserved; for the person obliged is as incapable of knowing her benefactress as her benefactress is unwilling to be known by her."\*



Evidence of the great abilities of this noble actor has already appeared in these pages, and records of what the unprejudiced and the competent thought of him : further testimony to the same effect abounds, and it is difficult to make a judicious selection.

Mr Addison says of him : “ Such an actor as Mr. Betterton ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans. The greatest orator (Tully), has thought fit to quote his judgment and celebrate his life. Roscius was the example to all that would form themselves into proper and winning behaviour, his action was so well adapted to the sentiments he expressed that the youth of Rome thought they wanted only to be virtuous to be as graceful in their appearance as Roscius. The imagination took a lovely impression of what was great and good ; and they, who never thought of setting up the art of imitation, became themselves inimitable characters. There is no human invention so aptly calculated for the forming of a free-born people, as that of a theatre. Tully reports that the celebrated Roscius used frequently to say, the perfection of an actor is only to become what he is doing. I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in, when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in the part of Othello ; the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind, upon the innocent answers Desdemona makes, betrayed in his gesture such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart ; and perfectly convince him, that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers, jealousy. Whoever reads in his closet this admirable scene will find

that he cannot (except he has as warm an imagination as Shakespeare himself) find any but dry, incoherent, and broken sentences. But a reader, that has seen Betterton act it, observes, there could not be a word added; that longer speeches had been un-natural, nay, impossible, in Othello's circumstances."

So marvellous was Betterton's power, so exact was he in following nature, that it is related that the look of surprise he assumed in the character of Hamlet, astonished Booth (when he personated the ghost) to such a degree that he was unable to proceed in his part for some moments.

"The following account of Betterton's amazing feeling will furnish a proof that when the player is truly impressed with his character, he will, in the representation of fear and terror, assume a pallid hue, as well as the contrary complexion from different emotions.

"I have lately been told by a gentleman who has frequently seen Betterton perform Hamlet, that he discerned his countenance, which was naturally ruddy and sanguine, in the scene of the third act, where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotions of amazement and horror, turn, instantly, on the sight of his father's spirit, as pale as his neckcloth; when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremour, inexpressible; so that, had his father's ghost actually risen before him, he could not have been seized with more real agonies. And this was felt so strongly by the audience that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise, and they, in some measure, partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected."\*

\* Davies' Dram. Miscell.

“Betterton's Hotspur is celebrated by Cibber amongst his most capital exhibitions, and by Sir Richard Steele in the *Tatler*. But the versatility of Betterton's genius was never more conspicuous than in his resigning the choleric Hotspur, in his declining years, and assuming the humour and gaiety of Falstaff, in which he is said to have been full as acceptable to the public as in the former. Being a perfect master of his profession, he wore the sock with as much ease and grace as the buskin. With the greatest stock of merit, this consummate comedian possessed an equal share of modesty. He was ever open to advice, and refused it from no man who offered it.”\*

“Much has been said by Downes, by the *Tatler*, by Cibber, and others, of Betterton's uncommon powers of action and utterance in several of Shakespeare's principal parts, particularly Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and Brutus, but no writer has taken notice of his exhibition of Lear; a part of equal consequence, and requiring as perfect skill in the player as any of them. I am almost tempted to believe that this tragedy, notwithstanding that Tate's alterations were approved, was not in such an equal degree of favour with the public, as Hamlet, Othello, and many other of our poet's dramas. The *Spectators*, when they were first published, contained theatrical advertisements, but no Lear is, I believe, to be found amongst them; had it been a favourite tragedy, Wilks, after the death of Betterton, would, in all probability, have seized Lear for his friend John Mills, and this would have served the double purpose of elevating his favourite and of depressing Booth, whose pretensions to

\* Davies' Dram. Miscell.

the character were more just. It is in vain, therefore, to talk of Betterton's Lear, for we know nothing of it."\*

"Betterton, after the re-union of the companies, acted Alexander with as much *eclat* as any of his other characters. This accomplished and yet modest player, when rehearsing this character, was at a loss to recover a particular emphasis of Hart, which gave a force to some interesting situation of the part; he applied for information to the players who stood near him. At last one of the lowest of the company repeated the line exactly in Hart's key. Betterton thanked him heartily, and put a piece of money in his hand as a reward for so acceptable a service.

"But Betterton, growing in years, soon resigned this laborious part to Mountfort, of whose merits, in acting lovers and heroes, Cibber speaks at large. On the unhappy murder of Mountfort, Betterton, says Cibber, resumed Alexander, and threw unexpected lustre on the part."\*

"Actors will sometimes give a force and a truth to a character beyond what the author himself conceived, and I could name literal instances of it. Let it not then be credited that an actor is but a mere vehicle, a conveyance. Many that pass for actors, indeed, are but little more; but the eminent requisites are strongly mental, and require a great deal that good authors have, and a great deal that they want; and it is upon this account that, while the stage has been inundated by authors for two hundred years, many of them men of great talents; the world has seen but one Betterton and one Garriek."†

Here we must add a few more words from Doran on this matter :—

\* Davies' Dram. Miscell.

† Dibdin's Hist. Stage.

“ I can never look on Kneller’s masterly portrait of this great player, without envying those who had the good fortune to see the original, especially in Hamlet. How grand the head, how lofty the brow, what eloquence and fire in the eyes, how firm the mouth, how manly the sum of all ! How is the whole audience subdued almost to tears at the mingled love and awe which he displays in presence of the spirit of his father ! Some idea of Betterton’s acting in this scene may be derived from Cibber’s description of it, and from that I come to the conclusion that Betterton fulfilled all that Overbury laid down with regard to what best graced an actor. ‘ Whatsoever is commendable to the grave orator is most exquisitely perfect in him ; for by a full and significant action of body he charms our attention. Sit in a full theatre, and you will think you see so many lines drawn from the circumference of so many ears, while the actor is the centre.’ This was especially the case with Betterton ; and now, as Hamlet’s first soliloquy closes, and the charmed but silent audience ‘ feel music’s pulse in all their arteries,’ Mr. Pepys almost too loudly exclaims in his ecstasy, ‘ It’s the best acted part ever done by man.’ And the audience think so too.”

Betterton appears to have been a man as highly respected for his moral and amiable character as for his dramatic talent. His knowledge of things was most extensive, and his opinion was regarded as of the greatest value, yet he is said to have been the most modest man living. “ The young actors *revered* him as a parent, but they *loved* him as a parent at the same time. He was gentle in his language, mild in his behaviour, ready in commendation, sincere in advice, and so indirect in his reproofs, that he had an art of shewing men their foibles without their seeing that this was

what he intended, and the secret was the better kept, because he never mentioned such failings to another man. He was so far from putting on assuming looks and a supercilious air to young authors, that he always insisted on their reading his parts to him, and took their instructions in the acting them, with the utmost deference and respect. He was naturally cheerful and had a very high confidence in Providence."

Unfortunately, in his later years Betterton was induced to invest the bulk of his property in a commercial venture to the Indies, at the instigation and persuasion of Sir Frederick Watson; failure ensued, and he lost the greater part of what he had possessed. But the man whose scheme had nearly ruined him, was himself totally ruined. What was Betterton's action! He actually adopted the ruined man's child, and devoted himself heart and soul to her welfare and education.

It is not to be wondered at that such a man found many friends amongst the distinguished of the day, who deemed his acquaintance an honour and a privilege; one such friend was Archbishop Tillotson, a man whose charity and mental breadth made him recognise and admire honest worth wherever he met it. Thus, as has been said, "it is indisputable that when Betterton and Tillotson met, the greatest preacher and the greatest player of the day were together." It was Tillotson who told the actor one day how puzzled he was to account for the vaster power the later possessed over human sympathies and antipathies, than he had hitherto done as a preacher, and the reply was, "You in the pulpit only tell a story: I, on the stage, show facts."

"The claims of Betterton, as an original author, are not



greatly distinguished, but his alterations and adaptations to the stage of several dramas are considered highly judicious." The following statement by a writer in an old volume of the Gentleman's Magazine will be found of interest.

"While I was intent in observing, &c., I discerned a man advanced in years, with a manly look, distinguished more by his modest behaviour than by his dress, leaning over the the back of Dryden's seat, but standing without the rail which enclosed the assembly. As there was somewhat striking in his aspect, I examined his features more narrowly, and found them variously affected according as he threw his eyes upon the different members, so that he seemed severally to assume their most distinguishing characters. Dryden at this time accidentally rose from his seat, and turning round discovered this extraordinary person. He then took him by the hand with great affection, and though the other seemed much to decline it, led him about to the bar of the rails, where the other members entered. I observed Dennis, who had now reassumed his post, interposing to hinder his entry, but being checked by a frown from Dryden, he desisted with a furious reluctance. Dryden then led the new member up to a seat not far from Otway, where he was placed, to the great satisfaction of the rest of the members. I was not able to know who this was till my conductor assured me it was Betterton, the famous player, who by the beauty and justness of his action, made the thoughts of some of our finest poets to be felt by those who could only read and see, and who, perhaps, never knew any other sentiment of virtue than what they received from the stage. Observe, continued he, how many others of the



same profession crowd behind the members' seats, what distortions, what grimaces they assume, how unlike to Betterton, and how much disregarded by the assembly."—  
(vol. 9).

## A PROLOGUE

*To the University of Oxford.*

Spoken by MR. BETTERTON, on Monday, July the 5th, 1703.

ONCE more our London muses pleas'd repair,  
 To this bless'd seat, and breathe their native air ;  
 Here seek protection from their kindred gown,  
 Glad to retire from that degenerate town :  
 Where spurious critics in false judgment sit.  
 Debauch'd with farce, and negligent of wit ;  
 Our indignation equally they raise,  
 Whether they frown, or smile upon our plays, }  
 And damn us with the scandal of their praise. }

Now, to our wish, we have an audience found  
 Which will be pleas'd with sense, and well as sound ;  
 You only can reform th' unthinking age,  
 Redcem our credit lost, and dignify the stage.  
 Wit is your growth, and now ('tis all we crave)  
 Retrieve that honour which before you gave :  
 Poetry yet will thrive, if rais'd by you ;  
 As plants their fading vigour will renew, }  
 From that kind soil in which at first they grew. }  
 Your learned censures will instruct the town,  
 And teach them when to smile, and when to frown, }  
 And by your judgment to improve their own }

You as wits higher powers our doom reveal,  
From whose decisive court there's no appeal.

Then rise, Athenians ! in the just defence  
Of poetry oppress'd, and long neglected sense ;  
The reputation of our art advance,  
Suppress th' exorbitance of song and dance, }  
And in one Pow'rful party conquer *France* :

Nor have we vicious entertainments brought ;  
You safely may approve, and smile without a fault.  
With shame, we must confess, our city guests  
Have been regal'd with such unwholesome feasts ;  
With greediness the fulsome bait they seize,  
And dress'd in vice, ev'n sense itself will please.

But now w'have nought t' offend the chastest ear  
You from imputed crimes our stage shall clear, }  
For none will blush to own, what you vouchsafe to hear.

Thus far their poet, who might blush to view }  
An audience he condemns in cens'ring you :  
If pens immodest, what was modest knew. }  
Now on your side the *London* muse should rise,  
And vindicate whom all that know must prize ;  
But you'll give leave, our answer he delay'd,  
Till in the following scenes our duty's paid :  
Those finish'd once, and honoured with your sight,  
Our *Epilogue* shall do their *Prologue* right.

## A PREFATORY PROLOGUE

By way of Introduction

To one spoken by MR. BETTERTON, at Oxford, on Monday,  
the 5th of July.

Spoken by MR. MILLS, at the Theatre Royal, in Drury-Lane,  
on Friday, the 16th of July, and Friday, the 23rd, 1703.

AS paupers who on charity are fed  
Should bless their absent patrons for their bread,  
Tho' for a while no wonted bounty's fall,  
And pious ears are distant from their call :  
So would we let our gratitude be seen,  
Both for our friends that *are*, and friends have *been* ;  
To these, that by their gracious smiles we live ;  
To those, for favours they vouchsaf'd to give ;  
But to'ther house has other methods chose,  
And treat their distant friends like common foes :  
Traduce their judgments, and their sense deride,  
Who never judg'd *amiss*, but on their *side* ;  
Like mercenary's reeking from the stews,  
Who in one lover's arms the rest abuse.  
Nothing have we to please you that is new  
In them ev'n ridicule is out of view,  
And not a subject left since they withdrew.

*Satyr* is lost in this deserted town,  
And we can give no scandal but their own :  
Accept it then, 'tis inoffensive writ,  
And take their satyr on *themselves* for wit :  
Since its base spite your characters secures,  
And shews their want of sense in blaming yours,  
As you distinguish ours from their designs,  
And know their grateful temper by their lines.

THE END.

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